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Book

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1803

A
V O Y A G E

IN THE
INDIAN OCEAN AND TO BENGAL,
Undertaken in the Year 1790 :

CONTAINING
AN ACCOUNT OF THE SEHELLES-ISLANDS
AND TRINCOMALE;

The Character and Arts of the People of India;
WITH SOME REMARKABLE RELIGIOUS RITES
OF THE INHABITANTS OF BENGAL.

TO WHICH IS ADDED,
A VOYAGE IN THE RED SEA;

INCLUDING
A DESCRIPTION OF MOCHA,
AND OF THE TRADE OF THE ARABS OF YEMEN;
With some particulars of their Manners, Customs, &c.

TRANSLATED FROM THE FRENCH OF
L. DE GRANDPRÉ.
An Officer in the French Army.

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V O Y A G E

IN THE

INDIAN OCEAN, &c.

I WAS at the Isle of France in the year 1799, with a vessel too large and too sharp for the country. Not being able to dispose of her, I resolv'd on a trip to Bengal, where I hoped to find a good price and a ready market, though her construction was ill adapted to the navigation of the Ganges. But appearances being in her favour, this defect I trusted would be overlooked, and I was not mistaken.

I accordingly prepared for my departure, and was soon ready for sea. Several motives, and economy among the rest, determin'd me to discharge all my Europeans, and work the ship with black Indians, known by the name of Lascars; but, finding it impossible to procure them, I was under the necessity of putting up with thirty Manillese, whose pusillanimity and want of skill rendered the passage extremely difficult.

The first vexation I experienced was their causing me to miss the harbour of the Isle of Bourbon, where I intended to have taken in fresh provisions. I was therefore oblig'd to steer for the Sechelles-Islands, and I consider'd it as an instance of good fortune, that I arriv'd there in safety, after traversing a dangerous archipelago, in which navigation is

VOYAGE

subject to a number of manœuvres, that require an experienced crew.

After four days of anxiety and labour, I arrived upon the Sechelles' bank. Those who are desirous of having a correct idea of this cluster of islands and rocks, may be fully gratified by the chart of the chevalier Grenier. My approach to the bank was announced by the lead, and the *Isle aux Frégates* being in sight confirmed my situation. At six o'clock in the evening I made that small island, and directed my course for Mahé, the capital of these establishments, which the distance yet prevented me from perceiving. I was then in thirty fathom water.

The night was extremely tempestuous, and the next day, about eight in the morning, I discovered Mahé, where I came to anchor at three in the afternoon. The governor was an officer of engineers detached from the Isle of France, and I received from him all the attention and assistance I could desire.

The Sechelles form a small and distinct archipelago in the midst of the large one to the north of the Isle of France. They are elevated above a bank of sand, which entirely surrounds them. Their name is a compliment paid to M. de Sechelles; and the principal port derives its appellation in like manner from M. Mahé de la Bourdonnaie, the governor, to whom the colony of the Isle of France is indebted for its beginning splendour.

It is singular, that islands should have soundings, as these have, at a great distance from shore; and it is a circumstance at the same time extremely advantageous to mariners, who, when in search of them, can neither well miss them, nor come upon them unexpectedly, so as to endanger their vessel.

Among this group of islands some are nothing more than barren rocks; but four of them, Mahé,

St. Anne, Prallin, and Fregates, contain water, and are capable of cultivation. Mahe is the principal and largest, and is about five leagues in circumference. It is of a secondary height, that is to say, upwards of a thousand feet, as I guessed at least, for I had no time to make exact observations. The whole island is a continued mountain, having several peaks without any considerable vallies between them. It is primitive or granitic, and the bare sides of the peaks, rising perpendicularly, discover, in many places, granite in its purity.

This mountain, as well as those the tops of which compose the other islands, have undoubtedly served as a resting-place, against which the ocean, gradually depositing its sediments, has formed the bank that surrounds them; and they will therefore, in a course of time, be united, in all probability, into one island.

Let us for a moment attend here to the physical changes of the globe, and the gradual organization of banks and masses from materials which the sea heaps together in her bosom. The form of the Sechelles' bank appears to furnish matter for reflection on the subject. If we remark, that the currents in the track of the general winds always follow the impulse of those winds, that is, here, always run to the north-west, we shall easily conceive, that these peaks of granite, uniting together at the base at a certain depth, have collected, for a long succession of ages, all the loose matter and extraneous bodies which the waves and tides have thrown in their way: driven against the south-west points of these peaks, these materials have been stopped there, and have formed the bank above which the Sechelles-Islands rise.

To this it will perhaps be objected, that some islands have their anchorage to leeward, as, for instance,

the Isles of France and Bourbon, and those of St. Helena and Ascension, where no foundings are found to windward, and which have all a small bank on the side opposite to the current. The answer is plain: these islands are volcanic. The Isle of France bears such evident vestiges of an eruption, that lava is found at every step. That of Bourbon is burning at present; the peak of Salazes is a volcano; and St. Helena still exhibits the traces of flames on her mountains. As to Ascension, its conflagration is so recent that its soil is nothing but ashes; it has not yet had time to recover its springs, and accordingly a drop of water is not to be found through the whole island.

Whether these islands are the wreck of a mutilated continent, or have been thrown up by a submarine explosion, which I should rather admit, their formation has been accompanied by accidents that have given cause for the accumulation of the banks in question, which have no relation whatever to those gradually organized by the sea. These islands are too new for the ocean to have had time to throw up against them the materials, which form shelves and masses accumulated in the silence of ages.

The bank which surrounds the Sechelles extends a considerable distance to leeward; but nothing can thence be concluded against what I have advanced. For this fact to subvert my theory, it would be necessary that the isle of Mahé should be alone; whereas it is comprised in an archipelago situated in the midst of two others still more extensive, and at no great distance apart. It is evident, that at various depths, never very considerable, these islands are all joined together at the base, from the northern extremity of the Laccadives even to the Isles of France and Bourbon. The mountains of this continent form the islands that are perceptible and known to us; and many

others must exist, that, from their want of elevation, are condemned to remain submerged. The isle of Mahé is surrounded by tops of this kind, which, unable to rise above the waves, have only intercepted the materials dragged on by the ocean in its course: they are now covered, and form the bank, the figure of which answers to their situation. It is probable, that the leeward part of the Sechelles' bank will not be left dry till long after that to windward; because the currents, having now no obstacle opposed to them, carry off with them into the immensity of the deep the extraneous bodies which escape from the islands of this archipelago; while, on the contrary, the isle of Mahé and the rest, opposing a barrier to the tides, force them to deposit the sediments they contain on the point of resistance. This hypothesis is proved almost to evidence; for the bank of the Sechelles is elevated considerably to windward, so that we find only a very small depth of water in the direct line of the tides, that is to say, to the south-east, and this depth must necessarily diminish daily. In short, if any thing can give weight to my conjecture, it is, that the harbour of the Sechelles very sensibly becomes shallower, as does that also of the Isle of France: which demonstrates, not only that the ocean collects in those places the extraneous bodies by which they are organized, but also, that its easy and gradual retreat takes place in these climates in the same uniform manner as our philosophers have remarked in other parts of the globe.

As to the form of mountains, I shall observe, that, in general, when we meet with any of which the sides are perpendicular, we need not hesitate in pronouncing them to be either primitive or volcanic; for that shape denotes either an explosion or a strong commotion. The secondary mountains, on the contrary, formed gradually by the ocean of ma-

terials incessantly collected by it, are oblique, unless they have been heaped on a steep rock; in which case, or if they have served, after their formation, as a bed for a current, they may have been hollowed by the water, or cut perpendicularly: but such examples are rare.

Since the period when the mountains of these islands were projected, in one of the great revolutions of the globe, nature has had time to gather upon them so great a quantity of vegetable substance, that, except in places where their form would not admit of it, they are every where covered by a bed of very thick earth; and, as they have only been frequented since the present century, they produce an extremely vigorous vegetation. The isle of Mahé has but a single cluster of trees proper for ship-building, and of these a great many have been destroyed in the erection of houses; but the government of the Mauritius has taken this object into consideration, and issued decrees for its preservation, particularly the tatamaka wood, which affords the fine curved pieces used in the construction of ships.

The isle of Mahé supports three small islands nearly adjoining. The space comprised between the former and one of the latter, called St. Anne, forms a fine bay, serving as a harbour, which affords an excellent anchorage. These islands are surrounded by an immense quantity of coral; probably the original matter of which the fragments heaped together by the ocean gradually form the banks and islands which the sea organizes.

The coral here forms shelves of great extent; they rise to the very surface of the sea; but at the bottom of the bay, opposite Mahé nature has made a narrow channel, proceeding in a serpentine direction to the shore, and admitting a great depth of water. This place is commonly called Barachouas,

and, in case of necessity, might be made an harbour. The passage is very well adapted for that purpose, having perpendicular banks of coral on each side, which form a quay even with the water's edge; so that the channel is never exposed to the roughness of the sea.

Vessels wishing to enter there carry a grapnel to the coral banks, and thus moor without the trouble of dropping the anchor.

The possession of these islands is of the greatest importance to France; and she took care therefore to secure them, as soon as the colony of the Mauritius had acquired a degree of prosperity. The port and road of the Sechelles are at so small a distance from it, as to be able to annoy its trade, and cut off its communication with India: so that, supposing they were of no other use, it must ever be of importance to the French government to prevent their falling into the hands of its enemies; but they are valuable on other accounts.

When the French succeeded in pilfering spices from the Dutch, the plants were conveyed to the Isle of France, and carefully cultivated in the king's garden: a few prosperous years, with skilful and expensive management, gave reason to hope they might be naturalized there, and government had even begun to distribute the young plants among the inhabitants, and teach them how they were to be reared; but the hurricanes soon put an end to so flattering a prospect: the settler grew weary of the expense and extreme care necessary to the support of an object of which the profit, while it was uncertain, was also at least far distant; and the results, even in the king's garden, were by no means so satisfactory as was expected. The cinnamon produced only a light bark, triflingly unctuous, and very inferior in quality to that of the Moluccas. The

clove-trees dwindled ; and though the plant itself appeared healthy, its fruit did not answer the expectation of government. In a word, this business was nothing more, properly speaking, than an object of curiosity : like those orange-trees in Russia, or in the North of Germany, which produce fruit by dint of attention, but the fruit is degenerate, has no taste, no flavour, and scarcely even any smell.

The Sechelles, being in a latitude similar to the Moluccas, and presenting some probability in favour of this species of cultivation, now attracted the attention of administration. Plants were conveyed thither with the utmost secrecy ; and as the negro-ships generally put in at the Isle of Mahé, to procure water and turtle, care was taken to choose a place on the other side of the island, to prevent its being known, and they were deposited near the royal creek, and abandoned to nature.

Their success surpassed every hope ; the cinnamon-trees, particularly, spread with such rapidity, that the canton wherever the lofty trees would permit them to grow, was shortly covered with them. The cloves and nutmegs succeeded also, but did not increase in the same proportion.

Things were in this state when war was declared, in 1778, between France and England. Viscount de Souillac, governor of the Isles of France and Bourbon, with their dependencies, animated by a pure and well-directed patriotism, took every precaution to prevent the enemies of the state from seizing on the precious result of so much labour, patience, and expense ; but the person charged with the execution of his orders was deficient in the judgment necessary for the execution of so important a commission. Government had generally maintained a military post on this island ; but from the fear of its being surprised, it was discontinued

at the commencement of the war, and an overseer only left there with a few blacks, whose orders were, to take the most effectual means of destroying the cinnamon-trees the moment the enemy should attempt to take possession of the island. Unfortunately, a large French ship from Madagascar put in to water at Mahé; and the overseer, mistaking her for an enemy, believing he should be attacked, and fearful of not having time to execute his instructions, immediately set fire to the spice-trees, and destroyed them all.

Thus perished the hopes of the French government. The birds, however, which in general are fond of the fruit of the cinnamon-tree, had carried off a great number of berries, of which some had dropped accidentally in the woods of the interior of the islands, where they produced new plants, which were found there at the peace of 1783. Of these great care was taken; and when I visited the island, the cinnamon, clove, and nutmeg-trees were in good condition, though not very numerous. There is no doubt that every kind of spice might be cultivated in the Sechelles-Islands; and France, notwithstanding their little extent, derive from them a sufficient quantity for the consumption of the republic. No climate can be more favourable; and the instances I have cited incontestibly prove, that the success would be complete. But, since the trials which have been made at Cayenne, it would appear that government has lost sight of the project of naturalizing them on these islands.

In 1790 grants of land were offered to any inhabitant of the Isle of France who wished to settle at Mahé, and soon the whole island was disposed of; but no person at that time had fixed his residence either on the isle of Praslin or that of Frégates; and as to St. Anne's, government had united it to the

royal domains, to leave it for the use of ships resorting to the port, who had liberty to land their crews for the benefit of their health, without the least apprehension as to the other islands, with which, in case of contagion, all communication is cut off.

These settlers finding it difficult to live, much more to enjoy themselves, have neglected the spice-trees, and even destroyed them, that they might devote themselves to the cultivation of rice, maize, manioc, cocoa-trees, and to fishing for turtle. This last article presented so alluring a bait to their industry, by the profit it afforded, that they pursued it with an avidity which threatened in a short time the destruction of the species. Government therefore interfered, and the fishing is now subject to restrictions. As these islands had been long uninhabited, the turtle came there in abundance to lay their eggs; but now, disturbed by the inhabitants, they manifestly become every day more scarce. Government preserves the females in an inclosure on the beach, where any one may be supplied for his own consumption, but not for trade. This is an excellent resource to vessels whose crews are attacked by the scurvy. The males that are taken are always set at liberty.

These islands produce also a kind of cocoa peculiar to themselves, called sea or twin-cocoa; which is in request through all Asia, on account of its scarceness.

The soil of the Sechelles is new, and consequently extremely fertile: indigo is indigenous there; all the plants prosper; horned-cattle languish; but goats and pigs thrive; and poultry do well and become fat in a short time. The rice has attracted the attention of cultivators, by its superiority over any other in the world. Yet, notwithstanding all

this, the colony, in its present state, is of no value ; and, though it holds out great advantages, is reduced to a mere provision-warehouse for the small number of vessels that visit it : nor can it be considered in any other light till a wise administration shall think proper to restore it to its first destination.

I made some remarks on turtle at these islands, which may perhaps give birth to conjectures on a fact that has not yet fixed the attention of naturalists.

Does the land-turtle, or tortoise, ever swim or undertake long passages by sea ? To throw light upon this question, it may be useful perhaps to observe, that the Sechelles-Islands abound in this species of tortoise. How did they come there ? Moreover, tortoises taken at the isle of Praslin, deposited in the inclosure of that place, and marked on the back with a circle made by a cooper's screeving iron, have been re-taken three leagues off on another island called *l' Isle aux Cerfs*, near the barachouas of Mahé. Others, put into the inclosure of the *Isle aux Cerfs*, and marked in a particular manner, have been retaken at Mahé, from which it is separated by the bay and harbour, making at least the distance of a league. This fact may be relied on : I mention it because I never heard that these tortoises undertook such long excursions by sea. The observation appears to me to be new, and I am anxious to communicate it to naturalists.

During my stay at the Sechelles I had nearly lost my boat and those of my crew who were in it. They suffered themselves to be driven on the coast by a light breeze, which their pusillanimity rendered them unable to counteract. I feared they were carried out to sea, where they would inevitably have perished ; but, fortunately, they were brought back the next day. They had run aground near the plan-

tation of an inhabitant who cultivated cocoa, which they pillaged without mercy, carrying off three thousand nuts, with which they laded the boat. The planter, whom I begged to set a value upon his loss, was satisfied with thirty Spanish dollars, which I paid without hesitation.

Every thing being ready for my departure, I weighed anchor and stood to the north, keeping that course till I came within nine degrees north latitude, in order to pass between the Laccadives and the Maldives. The day on which I reached the passage was marked by the loss of a sailor, a Manillese, who fell into the sea while he was employed in bending a new fore-sail. The poor fellow swam like a fish, and at first diverted himself by calling to each of the crew by name, inviting them to jump in and bathe with him. It was then about four o'clock in the afternoon, the wind began to freshen, and the ship was going at the rate of little more than three miles an hour. The officer who had the watch put about in an instant; a hen-coop, some buoys and other things, were thrown overboard to assist him, but he jestingly disdained them, hoping by dint of skill to come up with the vessel. At last a cask was hove out, with a lead-line fastened to it of two hundred fathoms, to which I added upwards of four hundred fathoms of rope of different sizes, but all to no purpose: he could not get hold of it, the wind and current driving the vessel faster than he could swim. As soon as he perceived the affair to be growing serious, he was seen to exert all his force, and every now and then to lift up his arms to show himself.

Wishing to neglect no means of saving him, I had given orders for the boat to be hoisted out: but, as it was extremely heavy, we found it impossible to do it soon enough. The Blacks of Manilla,

instead of lending a hand, remained upon the gangways gazing at their ship-mate, and calling to him in their language, which I did not understand; and neither blows nor exhortations could induce them to remain at the capstan, to put about the ship.

A heavy sea striking us upon the beam made the vessel roll so excessively, that all our efforts were scarcely sufficient to secure the boat and prevent accidents; at length, about seven in the evening, when we were on the point of attaining our object, it became dark. We had now lost sight of the unfortunate swimmer for more than an hour and a half; and with such miserable sailors I gave up the hope of recovering him, persuaded that if I were to lower my boat in the night in so heavy a sea to put to windward, I should endanger the whole of its crew, particularly at a season when we were every moment exposed to a hurricane. Besides, the experience I had had of the inactivity of the Blacks, in what they had done off the Isle of Bourbon and at the Sechelles, convinced me, that their efforts would be of no avail; I therefore continued my course, leaving the unhappy wretch, who I had no doubt was by this time drowned, to his fate.

The tides during the south-west monsoon are so violent between the Maldiv-Islands and the Laccadives, that we are subject to lose our reckoning, especially if we are not able to make observations of longitude. To prevent gross errors, and that a vessel may not fall in unexpectedly with the land, which might be dangerous in the night, there is one remark to be made, which is rather of a singular nature.

After passing the meridian of the Maldives, and when we are between them and the coast of Malabar, there is seen on the surface of the water a great number of living serpents, floating without move-

ment, their bodies rolled up, the head erect, and the look stedfast. They begin to appear as soon as we get within the Maldives ; but they are not very numerous till we arrive at about eight or ten leagues from the coast, and their numbers increase as we approach. It is supposed, that they are forced down the rivers of the coast of Malabar, which are swelled by the abundant rains that prevail at that season, and which carry off with them whatever they meet in their passage. These floods are sometimes so considerable, that the sea is tinged by them six or seven leagues from the shore.

Two days after losing the Manillese I have mentioned, I discovered land about six in the evening. The weather was thick and cloudy, with rain and light airs at intervals. I found myself too near the coast and hauled my wind to stand off. I was borne by the currents with astonishing rapidity ; in the evening the rain increased, and the wind fell quite calm. As, however, there was a very heavy swell, the ship rolled considerably, and the wet sails, by beating against the masts, were soon rent to pieces. It became necessary to unbend the topails, and thus for a while to remain under bare poles, exposed to whatever Heaven might please to ordain. While fresh sails were bending, I ordered the lead to be hove constantly ; and I saw with pleasure, that the tide carried me on the course I wished to go as accurately as if I had been able to manage the ship.

About eleven o'clock the swell became less, and in the course of a few minutes was completely gone : then the sea seemed on a sudden to be on fire. This phenomenon has been observed by several navigators, who have described it. I find it impossible to give an idea of its appearance : the light does not resemble that produced by the track of a vessel and

fish in phosphoric seas; it is absolutely fire, or at least appears to be so, and it extends to the utmost limits of the horizon, so that the ship seems to swim on a burning ocean. The sea was gently agitated, and each undulation foamed like the waves of a river when the wind sets against the stream. It was this foam that sparkled, each small surge resembling a body of fire.

The crew was very much terrified, and even the officers were alarmed. I explained the wonder, and told them, that it was by no means novel. I repeated what captain Cook had said on the subject, and observed to them, that this phenomenon was particularly mentioned by navigators as common near the Maldives. Wishing to prove to them still more satisfactorily that their fears were absurd, and that they had not the least danger to apprehend, the fire which they saw being nothing more, according to report, than a small phosphoric animal, I ordered a bucket of water to be drawn up and preserved till the next day, intending to examine it with them attentively. The sea appeared thus inflamed for the space of half an hour, when it wholly disappeared. The next day I inquired for the bucket of water, but it was not to be found; curiosity had fled with the fear of danger, and they preferred relying on my explanation, to giving themselves the trouble of examining what could have caused the phenomenon. To my great regret I thus lost an opportunity of making remarks on an object, which has justly excited the curiosity of the learned, and on which nothing satisfactory has yet been advanced. All that I was able to observe was, that as soon as the water was in the bucket it lost its brilliancy, and differed in no respect from its ordinary appearance.

I continued my course, standing for the southern point of Ceylon; and, coasting round that island, ar-

rived at Pondicherry nineteen days after my departure from the Isle of France. I had the misfortune, in mooring ship, to cast my anchor on the wreck of a vessel, which had been so long under water, that no one was acquainted with the circumstance. The result was, that I lost it; and in endeavouring to get it up, I broke an entirely new fifteen-inch cable. M. de Rozili, commander of the frigates *La Meduse* and *La Station*, gave me another to supply its place: he attempted also to recover mine; but by the effort he made he broke his tackle, and increased a leak in the fore part of his ship, that admitted two inches of water in an hour.

At the time of my landing at Pondicherry, that place, formerly the bulwark of the French in India, had been just evacuated by Mr. Conway: for which he was very much reproached. I am inclined to believe, that he did not merit it; but it is the fate, which every foreigner, who has the chief command in a nation in a state of rivalry with that in which he was born, ought to expect. Mr. Conway was an Irishman; the evacuation of Pondicherry left the English masters of India without opposition: it is therefore not surprising that suspicion should have fallen upon him.

The garrison consisted only of two hundred European infantry, a company of artillery, part of which were Caffres, and a battalion of black Spahis or Cipahis. The park of artillery was evacuated, and all the ammunition sent to the Isle of France. It may be proper here to take a rapid glance at the policy of the French in India.

The power of the French company in Asia was once equal to that of the English company. Madras submitted to its arms under the command of La Bourdonnaie; and the genius of governor Dupleix frustrated all the attempts of its enemies on Pondi-

cherry : but from that time the power of France in India has continued to decline.

That able governor was well aware, that for any foreign nation to pretend to maintain itself in India as a military power, without being ably supported in the interior, either by allies, or by a sovereignty over countries sufficiently extensive to raise respectable forces, was a vain chimera. He had already been elevated to the dignity of a nabob ; and if his recall to Europe had not arrested the course of his proceedings, it is impossible to calculate the consequences that might have resulted, favourable to his own country, and injurious to its enemies. After his departure, the vast plans he had formed were given up, and every thing was concentrated at the Isle of France, where a place of arms was erected, and whence it was imagined, that, in case of necessity, the requisite forces and supplies might be sent to India, to maintain a footing of equality.

This system was defective, as the event proved. Pondicherry was often taken : and the succours sent from the Isle of France were always either insufficient, or else arrived too late. But in Europe the blame was constantly thrown on those charged with the operations, without its being felt, that, when acting upon ill-concerted plans, the results of course must be ever unpropitious.

In the war of 1778 the Mauritius again failed in endeavouring to save Pondicherry : notwithstanding the vigorous defence of M. de Bellecombe, it was obliged to capitulate. Afterwards, when the forces under the command of M. de Buffy arrived in India, the idea was relinquished of re-establishing that place, which it had been found impracticable to retain. He took possession only of Goudelours and fort St. David, where the French established themselves, leaving Pondicherry open, and without

defence, a prey to the first that should think proper to enter it.

That unfortunate town was destined to become a school of fortification; for the Dutch and English have never failed, when they got possession of it, to raze every thing at all connected with military defence; so that, when ceded to France after a war, it was always to be rebuilt. M. de la Bourdonnaie had given them an example of greater moderation when he took fort St. George at Madras. It is not my wish to reproach any nation unjustly: but it is certain, that the English have never taken but to destroy; and their conquests may be easily traced by the ruins scattered on the shores of India. They could not even spare the French lodge at Yanaon, a simple building, which they pulled down as far as the windows of the ground-floor, leaving the ruins to attest their destructive disposition. Actuated by the same principles, after the last siege of Pondicherry, they not only razed the fortifications, but even the barracks for the troops. The French government had formerly given them some umbrage, and they now revenged themselves upon the stones.

When the French company, exhausted by losses, gave up its privilege, the royal administration took it into their own hands. It then appeared, that government was convinced of the necessity of opposing a counter-balance to the English power, which threatened to become what it is at present; and they endeavoured to open a negotiation with the republic of Mahrattas, the only power that could afford effectual support. But petty means only were employed for this purpose: the company had ruined itself by profusion, and now avarice became its substitute; no one dared to enter into engagements, and the agents of England, lavish of their gold, promising much, threatening more, and mak-

ing themselves respected by a force already become formidable, soon gained the ascendancy. Again the Mauritius was resorted to; and it was determined to make that place the centre of the French force to the eastward of the Cape of Good Hope.

At length, a deserter from the black troops * in the garrison of Pondicherry having made a large fortune, and laid the foundations of a considerable power, government seemed desirous of resuming the project of an alliance in the interior of the peninsula. The attachment of this man to France, and his irreconcilable hatred to England, who could never pardon his usurpation, assured to the French the support of the kingdom of Mysore. In the war of 1778, some judicious steps were taken: a French battalion, under the orders of M. de Coffigny, seconded his son Tippoo Saib, who greatly distinguished himself, from the hope of an irrevocable attachment to France. But all was to no purpose: Hyder Aly died; and his son, at the peace of 1783, was unmercifully abandoned.

Never was there a treaty so badly concerted; for the victories just gained by M. de Suffrein might have been turned to advantage, in obtaining an increase of territory and some places of importance; in a word, possessions that would have yielded a revenue. The English company at that time was not in a state to refuse a few sacrifices; but, instead of their being demanded, matters were replaced on the same footing as before the war, the possession of a small territory in the environs of Karikal excepted; government had even the indiscretion to give up Goudelours and fort St. David, thereby placing an enemy's fortrefs between the two French possessions. In short, France seemed to have no other object in view than to obtain the

*Hyder Aly.

independence of the English colonies in America, and, satisfied on that score, entirely neglected her establishments in India. On the coast of Malabar she obtained nothing; Mahé was restored to her, with the same territory as she had possessed previously to the war. In Bengal, Chandernagore and its territory was also restored, without any thing being added; and it was even stipulated, that a ditch should be sunk to drain off the water. It is remarkable, that this stipulation is to be found in the former treaty of peace. Also the ruins of the citadel of this town, of which the victories of France ought to have obtained a renovation, were once more condemned to remain as they were, dispersed over the deserted country. The French were allowed indeed lodges for commerce; and they supposed themselves to have made a master-stroke of policy in stipulating for the enjoyment of an unlimited trade in India. Thus, laying aside the dignity of a great state, they submitted to play an inferior part, under the empire of English pride. They pretended not to feel how useless was the condition of an unlimited trade, without a sufficient power to enforce the treaty, which the enemy might at any time elude and shackle by vexations and delays.

The event has proved how little dependence ought to have been placed on an engagement of this nature; for, a year after the peace, viscount de Souillac, who was governor-general of the French establishments, was constrained to sign a separate treaty with the English governors, by which the salt trade, the most lucrative in Bengal, was reduced to eight hundred thousand *maunds*.—A maund is seventy-five pounds.

As to Tippoo Sultan, he was not so much as mentioned in the treaty, but was abandoned in silence to the resentment of the English; and the

company would instantly have crushed him, but that it was deemed more advisable to wait till the French army should have quitted India, as it was not likely that so considerable a force would be kept on so small a territory. This calculation appeared in the sequel to be just.

Surprised at so disadvantageous a peace, and alarmed at the small degree of power retained by his allies in India, and the risk he should run if they were entirely to evacuate the country, that prince solicited some time after the support of France by a solemn embassy, which he sent to Versailles; but it was too late. The French government had come to a resolution to have only factors in India; the Isle of France was again the place of arms, where all the forces were to be concentrated, and every where else the French were to appear only on the footing of merchants. This system was supported with specious arguments. The English, it was said, will be on the losing side; they will be charged with the defence of the country and all the expenses of administration, while the French will have a trade without expense: they will have the trouble, and we the profit. In this manner did they deceive themselves: no argument could convince them, that this disadvantage was sufficient to cause the French to be excluded from a country, where their power was annihilated, by a nation sensible of her means, knowing how to turn them to profit, and determined never to recede a step when success or power attends her. The embassy of Tippoo had no other effect than that of causing England to demand a categorical answer from France, as to the intention of such a proceeding. To avoid dispute, the latter played a double part, and leaned to both sides, promising nothing certain to Tippoo, and ordering shortly after the evacuation of Pondicherry.

It was at this period that the first troubles broke out in Holland. France foreseeing hostilities between the powers of Europe, and fearful of having a part in them, ordered Mr. Conway to take possession of Trincomale, a port which insures the superiority of India to whatever power possesses it. That general had an army fully sufficient for the expedition: the place was guarded by a French regiment in the service of the Dutch company (the legion of Luxembourg); of this corps he was sure: yet such was the ill design or injudicious conduct of the general, that he totally failed, and, having done nothing, returned to Pondicherry, which he evacuated some time after.

During this expedition Pondicherry was left open and defenceless. The chevalier de Fresne, however, a very active and able officer, animated with sentiments of honour, and attachment to the glory of his country, being commandant of the place, exerted himself so effectually, that in a short time he covered the town on the northern side, and extended the fortifications to the gate of Vilnour, comprising two-thirds of its circumference.

The general, returning from his fruitless cruise, to his astonishment found the town in a state capable of making some defence. This circumstance, certainly, was no reason for abandoning it; but, whatever were his motives, he took this opportunity of putting the orders he had before received into execution, and departed for the Isle of France, followed by his forces and stores. Such precipitation raised the greater outcry against him, as he had been indiscreet enough to take a journey to Madras to see one of his old friends—a circumstance which malevolence did not fail to interpret to his disadvantage. Every thing, in fact, conspired to put the English company in possession of Pondicherry. The

evacuation was so badly contrived, that this unfortunate colony was left without even a possibility of making use of the small means of defence that remained : a few pieces of cannon were still in its possession ; but the balls left behind were of a different caliber. The resolution, however, of the chevalier de Fresne triumphed over every obstacle : he obtained a reinforcement of two hundred infantry, formed and disciplined a battalion of Sepoys, and succeeded in guarding the town.

Pondicherry has been always ill fortified ; that is to say, defended on a bad system : the object has constantly been to shelter the whole town, instead of building a strong citadel, and making merely a simple curtain to put the town out of danger of an attack with cavalry. Madras is fortified in this manner, and the English have found the benefit of it. M. de Lalli's attempts on it were fruitless ; the capture of the town did not advance him an inch towards the citadel, of which he was obliged to raise the siege.

Pondicherry is built in a circular form, on the borders of the sea, the coasts describing a chord, of which the ramparts were the sector. The radius is very considerable, as the sector was dodecagon, giving thirteen bastions and twelve ravelins, without reckoning the shore. A place like this requires a garrison of thirteen thousand men, according to M. de Vauban's scale of proportion, allowing five hundred men to each piece : and though the situation of the town, by facilitating its defence, may allow this number of troops to be in some degree diminished, it must be observed, that I omit the sea-shore, which, if fortified, ought to be made able to act against a fleet, which would require an additional number of men : so that, every allowance made, a garrison of twelve thousand men would at least be

necessary to defend Pondicherry, according to the rules of art, against an enemy who might attack it methodically, with the same means as are employed in Europe. On the contrary, had a good pentagon, or even a fort royal, been constructed, fifteen hundred men would have been sufficient; the expense of construction too would have been diminished; and it would have required a less quantity of artillery and stores.

Pondicherry is advantageously situated. Covered on the south by the river Coupang, called in the Portuguese language Arian-Coupang, it would be difficult to attack it regularly on that side. To the westward it is defended by an inundation, which would prevent the works necessary for an attack from being carried on, without infinite pains; and it would be difficult also to keep the water out of the trenches. Between this water and the Arian-Coupang are the road to Vilnour, and about three hundred toises of land; and here an attack might be made: but the vulnerable point of Pondicherry is to the north, as the country in that quarter is favourable for the necessary operations. An attack towards the gate of Vilnour must always be a feigned one, to engage or distract the attention: the true one must be to the north; and it is this point therefore which should be principally secured. If the same system of defence which has constantly been adopted be still persisted in, if it be wished to fortify the whole town, as has been hitherto the practice, I conceive that Cormontaigne's method could alone effectually defend it. M. de Fresne, deprived of the means of constructing regular fortifications, having no tools, no stones, no bricks, no wood to burn the latter, and no money, confined himself to works of earth, which he threw up according to the first method of Vauban, without

tenailles, but with a ravelin before each curtain; and as the earth in this country is apt to fly out, he gave to his ramparts a very great slope, and left at the foot of them a large berme to receive the earth that might fall down, and prevent it from filling up the ditch. The enemy having succeeded in draining the ditch during the siege which M. de Bellecombe sustained, attempts were made to guard against the inconvenience, by digging deep enough to attain a level lower than the river Arian-Coupang and the sheet of water; and security was thus obtained on that side. But though the ditch was deep and broad, the earth taken out was insufficient to construct the rampart as could have been wished. The bastions were not filled: they were accordingly less spacious, and did not afford to the party in possession the means of entrenching themselves.

At the time of my arrival in this town, the south side was just finished, but no covered way could be made, nor glacis that was tolerable: neither were there any palisades; for though they had cut and bought some at Trincomale, they had neglected to bring them; and if I except the place of arms of the ravelin covering the gate of Vilnour, and a few re-entering angles on the north front, there was not a single palisade in the whole circuit of the town. Two gates were still uncovered, without even a barrier; and the causeways across the ditch, leading from these gates, were massive, with no draw-bridge, nor any thing capable of defending them. The quarter towards the sea was open, and could oppose no other resistance, in case of attack, than a small battery, *à barbette*, used for salutes, except towards the north, where there was a front in which they had contrived a gate, covered by a miserable ravelin. It was in this state when the English attacked it the last time; and how it could

have held out thirteen days after the opening of the trenches is astonishing. No revetment was any where to be seen : by filling the ditch with fascines, it might have been taken by storm at the first onset; while, by advancing methodically, the mining might have been carried on to the glacis in a single day. The earth of that country is too light for mines to be effected without the assistance of masons; for they would not answer in wood, and no time had been given for their construction : the English knew very well that there were none there, and it is almost incredible that they should have taken so much precaution in their approach, and have been obliged to make two attacks. The French at present would take a place like this in twelve hours.

As the king had ordered Pondicherry to be abandoned, the town would probably have been converted into a factory, if the talents of a single individual had not preserved it as a military place. The situation of the French in India was at that moment very precarious : Pondicherry was their chief establishment; and its government extended over its own territory and that of Karikal, independently of other establishments, which we shall proceed to describe.

The two possessions of Pondicherry and Karikal, together, might bring in a revenue of a lack and a half of rupees, which is a very insignificant sum. A rupee is nearly fifty sols; a lack is an hundred thousand rupees : so that a lack and a half make about three hundred and seventy-five thousand livres. This revenue was intended to suffice for the expense not only of those two establishments, but for that of others also that might require support.

To the northward, at Masulipatam, a lodge was established, and an agent appointed, to facilitate the commerce of handkerchiefs. As this article is suf-

ficiently known, I shall not enlarge upon the subject :—so much for the coast of Coromandel.

Karikal furnished rice and some piece goods, such as perculles, chittaras, &c. Pondicherry supplied Bengal with salt, and carried on a tolerable trade in blue dye. It was there that the white cloth sent from the north was dyed blue, and which then took the name of guinea-cloth. There also were painted chittaras and handkerchiefs *à vignette* of all kinds and on every sort of cloth. Moreover, what are called cambays, or white and blue linen, of different patterns were fabricated there, such as chaffe-lees, bajutapoes, neganepoes, tapseils, fotes, corots, handkerchiefs, brawles, coffelees, coupis, and other articles proper for trading with the Blacks, as well as a great quantity of white cloths known by the names of perculles and platilles. The dimities were procured at Goudelours. These objects united might raise, on an average, annually, about twelve or fifteen hundred thousand livres ; so that the trade was contained within very circumscribed limits.

On the coast of Golconda, France possessed a considerable *aldée* called Yanaon, situate on the river Godwarin, where she established a chief, several factories, and a regular police. This *aldée* was very populous, being the principal mart of the French commerce in that country. It contained six extremely rich commercial houses, without including the resident, who was almost always a civil or military officer. Here the contracts were made for the white linen cloth fabricated in the neighbourhood, which was brought in a raw state to Yanaon, where being bleached and packed up in bales, it was sent down the small river of Coringui, to the bay of the same name, where the ships received it.

From this *aldée* were obtained the linens called

four-threads, white and raw, and those called conjons. Conjon is an assemblage of an hundred and twenty threads: as the width of the cloth never varies, the greater number of conjons there are in a piece, the finer the linens must be. They begin counting at fourteen; at twenty-six the cloth may be called fine; thirty makes very beautiful shirting; it becomes superb at thirty-six, and at fifty it amounts to the *ne plus ultra*, beyond which they no longer count by conjons. The linen is then called bastard, and is of a most admirable texture and fineness.

The linen of twenty-six conjons is the most saleable; it is worth, on an average, thirteen rupees a piece; but the bastard cloth ought to sell for ten pagodas.

To understand these Indian coins, it may be necessary to observe, that an hundred star-pagodas, in the ordinary course of exchange, are worth from three hundred and fifty-four to three hundred and sixty rupees of Pondicherry; the three-figured pagoda fetches two per cent. more, while that of Porta-Nova, the least valuable of all, is sometimes reduced to three hundred. The current value of the pagoda is nine livres.

The rupee of Pondicherry is not the highest in value, but it possesses the advantage of never varying. France has had the liberty of coining money since the period when M. Dupleix was invested with the title of nabob. The money was royal, and its standard fixed by the ordinances of the king: the course of exchange was two hundred and thirteen rupees and a half for one hundred Spanish dollars. The rupee of Pondicherry is known by a crescent over a moorish legend on one side. The sicca rupee is the most valuable, and is known by a palm-tree; in general, two hundred of these are equal to a hundred dollars. The arcot rupee is an arti-

cle of traffic, and varies according to the demand for it.

Yanaon was certainly the place where France commercially had most to do. All her vessels were consigned to Yanaon, and the briskness of trade naturally produced a great degree of affluence. It was the most considerable *aldée* of the north. The sums laid out there in linen might amount, one year with another, in French and English commissions together, to twenty lacks of rupees, making nearly five millions of livres: to such a state was the commerce of the bay of Bengal reduced.

The government of Pondicherry extended also over the small town of Mahé, situated on the coast of Malabar. This town, formerly strong, populous, commercial, and the chief establishment of the French on that coast, is now reduced to nothing; it has experienced the same fate as every other place conquered by the English, namely, that of seeing its walls razed to their foundations. France has never thought of rebuilding them, and has consequently kept no military force there: the town has remained in a state of dullness and inactivity, increased by the vicinity of fort Talichery, whence the English continually menace it, and by means of which they may be considered as masters of it.

The trade of Mahé consists of pepper and beetle-nuts. It also produces a light kind of earth which serves to filter water; and which the natives have the art of making so thin and fine, that many of them, particularly women, in the habit of thus regaling themselves, do not hesitate to eat it. This earth is extremely spongy, and readily absorbs any liquid, without losing its consistency; and it often happens, after preserves have been served up on plates made of it, that the syrup remains imbibed, and the ladies eat them.

The beetle-nut is in great request throughout India: it resembles a nutmeg, in size as well as contexture and shape, without possessing either its taste or fragrance. The inside is of a lively red colour, and has an agreeable flavour; the Indians in general consume a great quantity of these nuts.

The town of Chandernagore and the lodges of Bengal, such as those of Balaffore, Patna, Dacca, and Chatigam, are also dependent on Pondicherry; and these places, with the large villages of Mahé and Karikal, the aldée or village of Yanaon, the houses of Masulipatam, with a revenue of about four hundred and twenty thousand livres, of which three hundred and seventy-five thousand arose from land, constituted the whole of the French power on the two coasts of India and in the province of Bengal.

To such a state was the nation reduced which formerly in this part of the globe vied with England in splendour; whilst her rival saw her flag hoisted on three principal fortresses, that secured to her the peaceable possession of the provinces she had acquired, and in which she supported, in 1791, including Blacks and Europeans, a force of twenty-five thousand men.

Having thus described the situation of the French in India, anterior to the present war, I shall add a few details on their coast establishments, before I speak of Bengal.

Though Trincomalee does not belong to France, is on the coast of Ceylon, and not on that of India, yet as it is situated in the bay of Bengal, as the French flag was flying there for some time, as it is become famous by the efforts of admirals Suffrein and Hugues, and as it is besides of extreme importance in time of war, the superiority in India depending on the possession of it, I shall begin with that town.

Trincomalee, or Trinkenomalee, belongs to the

Dutch, or at least was theirs before the present war, that nation, by a treaty with the king of Ceylon, being in possession of the whole coast of that island. It was alternately taken and retaken during the war of 1778, and at last remained with the French, who faithfully resigned it to the Dutch company at the peace of 1783.

The reputation of this town is certainly above its real value. The fort, properly speaking, consists but of a front fortification on the method of Marolois; it is in fact nothing more than a horn-work, whose two branches terminate on a mountain, at the foot of which it is situated, and by which it is defended behind; so that Trincomale can only be attacked on one side. The two branches of the horn-work are defended by the sea; or, to make myself better understood, the mountain of Trincomale is a large peninsula separated from the main land by an isthmus not exceeding two hundred toises in width, and which is barred by a front fortification. And this is the place that has made so much noise. Behind the fortification, at the foot of the mountain, is what is called the town, consisting of three small rows of houses, which form two streets. Near the foot of the mountain is also a well of very good water, the more valuable as there is no other truly drinkable to be found in the country. From the situation of this fortress, it would only be necessary to disembark a body of troops stronger than the garrison, and appear before the place, to blockade and starve it out. Its sole advantage is the being built on a rock, so that it can never be approached by mining, which must terminate about fifty toises from the foot of the rampart. When M. de Suffrein took it, there were no advanced works, except indeed a shapeless heap of earth, incapable of concealing in every part the bot-

tom of the wall ; so that the battering cannon, once mounted, might have been directed advantageously, without the trouble of a regular approach. The enemy did not wait for this, but surrendered in good time.

The Dutch major Von-baur has since remedied this inconvenience. That intelligent officer, with infinite patience, procured earth from other parts, and formed therewith a counterscarp and a good ditch. He constructed a ravelin, of necessity very small, as the line of defence is extremely short. The whole is surrounded by a good covered way, well pallisaded, and a glacis, by means of which it would be more easily defended against a sudden assault. The chief defect of the place is its situation.

Trincomale presents one of those striking traits which characterise the genius of a nation. In the hands of an active and energetic government, it would have become an impregnable fortress. It might have secured to its masters the possession of the whole coast of Coromandel, from which it is distant only twenty-four hours sail ; it would have served as a rallying point, both against the powers of India and those of Europe ; it would have been an arsenal whence they might have derived every means of attack and defence in the peninsula ; and its harbours and road would have admitted of a formidable naval establishment : in a word, Trincomale, in the possession of an enterprising nation, might have become the capital of India. Calcutta, which now enjoys that pre-eminence, is situated much less favourably for war.

Instead of feeling these advantages, the Dutch contented themselves with making it a small post just capable of defending them from any slight attack. Nature held out to them the means of rendering it a second Gibraltar ; for by building a large

citadel on the top of the mountain it would have been rendered inaccessible. This mountain is so steep as to be nearly perpendicular on every side ; it is formed like a tortoise, and would admit of a very extensive town. By digging wells in the rock, water would have been found in abundance ; it might have contained magazines of provisions for the service of a year or more ; from its height it would have been sheltered from the *ricochet* and enfilade ; and, in short, would have protected so effectually the back bay, that it might have blown to atoms any fleet daring enough to cast anchor in it. Instead of adopting a plan like this, the first settlers, struck with the facility of barring the isthmus of which I have spoken, and of entrenching themselves at the foot of the mountain against the natives of the country, imagined they could do nothing better than construct in haste a front fortification ; and even in doing this they followed a defective method, then in vogue, and which was merely sufficient to defend them against the Blacks of Candy. This work, very solidly built of stone, must have cost a considerable sum of money ; and when the Europeans at length became rivals in the seas of India, and had a mutual wish to dispossess each other, the Dutch company, actuated by petty mercantile views, adhered to it from avarice. If they were to alter the system of defence, and establish themselves on the mountain, what had already been expended would be wholly lost ; and they sacrificed everything to so trifling a consideration. They continued, as well as they could, to meliorate their actual situation, and were far from wishing to form an expensive establishment, whilst the one in question was not only already completed, but also required, from the nature of the fortification, only very small means for its defence and support. Such a system

of economy was clear gain in the eyes of a people, who, extending their views no further than the mechanism of trade, consider details merely without looking to important results. Hence, notwithstanding all that nature had done to render it celebrated, the port of Trincomale was condemned, from the insensibility of its masters, to remain in obscurity.

When we take a view of the island of Ceylon, and reflect on the situation of the Dutch establishments there, we are unable to guess for what reason they should fix their principal residence at Colombo, and why so wretched a port should have been made the capital of the island, instead of Trincomale. Is it possible they could have been induced to such a measure by the pearl-fishery in the gulf of Manar? That fishery is now so much reduced, that they might easily have judged how very defective such views would have been. If the cultivation of sugar in that neighbourhood was their reason, they might have obtained the same advantage at Trincomale. How could they neglect to fix the centre of their power in this port, by which they might have preserved their colonies of Palliacata and Sadras, and especially that of Negapatam, which they have seen transferred to the hands of their enemies? That they have kept the two first is simply owing to their possessions, in the state to which they are reduced, having become of no consequence. Palliacata, too near Madras, has seen its commerce swallowed up by the latter, even to its beautiful manufacture of handkerchiefs; and Sadras is now nothing more than a village mouldering behind the ruins of a fortress, the ramparts of which, dislocated by mines, still exhibit their former strength. The dwellings of the interior, unroofed and stripped, have the appearance of houses destroyed by fire; a spectacle common enough

in places conquered by the English, and to which the traveller who visits the country must accustom himself.

The fort of Trincomale not being large enough to contain all those who might have wished to settle there if the establishment had been prosperous, and scarcely affording sufficient room for the garrison, a piece of land was marked out for building a town on the outside, on the plain which separates the back bay from the harbour. But, with the exception of an extensive row of trees, used for the *bazar* or market-place of the Blacks, the town has remained imaginary; for I cannot call by that name a few gardens for the cultivation of tobacco, and three houses, with about thirty huts. This is a natural effect of the monopoly of the Dutch company, which not only refused to encourage commerce themselves, but even prevented industrious men from settling in their establishments.

At the end of the war of 1778, the French had begun, in some measure, to enliven trade at Trincomale. Cinnamon was easily procured there. Now that port has nothing to offer for sale; and when I put in there, on my return, with the *United Friends*, a ship which I commanded in 1792, I could not procure the least refreshment, though I had many articles which the commandant was anxious to obtain, and though the administration was in the greatest want of opium for the Malays living there*. As the country afforded no article

* The natives of the peninsula of Malacca are in the habit of eating a great quantity of opium, of which they are very fond: the effect it produces on them is a furious drunkennes. Those who take too large a dose fall into a paroxysm of rage, from which death alone can relieve them: for this reason the government keep men in pay at Malacca, whose employment is to patrol the streets on festivals, and who are always within call, should a man intoxicated with opium appear in the streets: if any one be seen in this situa-

of exchange except some bad tobacco cultivated in the neighbourhood, I could do no business. Money besides was not known among them, and they had nothing to offer me in payment but the company's notes, which I could not possibly accept.

Notwithstanding this state of penury, the establishment at the time I was there had an appearance of vigour. The king of Candy having refused to fulfil his treaty for cinnamon, and having destroyed besides from dissatisfaction a great number of trees, which were too contiguous to the Dutch establishments, the company had resolved to march an

tion, they pursue and kill him without mercy. But for this precaution, these madmen would commit the most terrible excesses, and though the utmost activity is used, it is often impossible to prevent accidents. They are generally armed with a poniard which they call *krist* or *krick*, the blade of which is half an inch broad and about eight inches long; it is made in a serpentine form, and leaves a wound at least two inches wide, which it is hardly practicable to probe, on account of the sinuosities occasioned by the instrument. This weapon is the more terrible from being poisoned. Its blade is always covered with grease, in which it is supposed they boil the green wood of the *mancenlier*. The effect of this poison is so sure, that it is impossible to escape; a wound made with it is certain death. They carry this *krist* in a wooden sheath, the blade being secured so as to avoid all friction, and preserve the poison with which it is covered, and which time, the general destroyer, seems to improve; at least the older it grows, the more rapidly it acts.

To form an idea of the rage and fury with which this opium inspires them, we should see them, in their combats on board pirate vessels, receive a lance through their bodies, and not being able to draw it out, take hold of it, and plunge it further in, to be able to get at their enemy, and stab him with their *krist*; a species of ferocity that obliges ships in danger of falling in with them to provide themselves with lances that have a guard through the middle of the shaft, by means of which they keep them off and suffer them to die at the end of the weapon without daring to draw it out till these furious beings have breathed their last.

The Dutch, by arming them with muskets, have rendered them tolerable soldiers, and substitute them instead of Sepoys: they are stationed at almost all their establishments; and it is seldom that Trincomale is without some companies of them.

army against him, and the governor-general of the island had in consequence sent a reinforcement from Colombo. The number of white troops amounted nearly to a thousand men, which gave to the place a considerable appearance of life and activity; but as to the road, my ship was the only one to be seen at anchor there.

Independently of the fort of Trincomale, the Dutch have built another for the defence of the port. This is on a mountain; and if they had taken half the pains with the first, which they have bestowed, at clear loss; on the second, they would have succeeded in making it a place capable of resistance. This fort is called Ostembourg, from the name of the mountain on which it is built: it is simply an oval, without angles or any thing whatever to flank. The battery is intended to cover the harbour; and the situation in reality is well chosen for the purpose, and, had it been differently constructed, might have been of very great service, though, on account of its elevation, the shot thrown from it must lose the advantage of rising again when they touch the water, and also that of raking the enemy, which is very much against it. But, by a most astonishing want of judgment in a nation known to be considerate, the only mountain not accessible is that on which they have neglected to build; while they have constructed a defective fort, at a great expense, on an eminence to which it is practicable to climb, and on which artillery may be mounted out of reach of their guns. They have not even cleared away the woods, under shelter of which it is easy to advance within ten toises of the rampart. The engineer (I humbly beg pardon for calling him so) who fortified Ostembourg seemed nevertheless to have had an idea that it might be attacked on the mountain side; for, in-

stead of terminating his fort circularly on that side, as in every other part, he formed a strait line, which barred the whole breadth of the mountain. Had he understood what he was about, he might have reaped great advantages from its situation; in reality he should have cleared away all the wood within cannon-shot, have formed an esplanade with it, and then, throwing up entrenchments and palisading them, have opposed a regular front to an attack. It had the advantage of not being able to be turned, and of defiling the faces of the bastions, which could never have been attacked but in front. But it was never supposed that it would enter the imagination of an enemy to approach this place by land, and nothing was thought of but erecting a battery for the harbour. M. de Suffrein, however, proved that an attack on the side of the mountain was practicable, for it was on that side that he took it.

Whatever be the defects of this fort, it cost in the construction a great deal of money. A number of useless works were erected, and among the rest an enormous cistern; whereas, with the eighth part of the expense, a well might have been sunk in the mountain, which is only composed of soft rough stone, and water would have been found at a very little depth, as it is met with in some places half way up the declivity.

The mountain of Ostembourg is one of those vast calcareous masses rising in this canton, between which the ocean has left passages and openings, which at present form magnificent bays and an excellent harbour. It is of an oblong form, steep at one extremity, and at the other gradually sloping off towards the plain; it projects into the grand basin which forms the harbour, and divides it into two parts, Nicholson-bay being on one side, and Ostembourg-road on the other.

The passage for entering the harbour is towards the steep extremity, at the foot of which, near the edge of the water, is erected a raking battery, which would have an excellent effect if it could be sheltered from the splinters which the enemy's shot would sever from the mountain. This battery however, the fort of Ostembourg, and that of Trincomale, having no communication with each other, and no intermediate posts, can render no mutual support; they are besides without defiles into the interior of the country, by which to obtain subsistence after the enemy has made good his landing. They stand therefore isolated and apart, and must defend themselves separately as well as they can.

The harbour of Trincomale is certainly very superb; and to judge of it from the accounts that have been given, it would seem to require nothing to render it perfect; there are, however, inconveniences belonging to it which it is proper should be made known.

The principal bay is immense; but it has no anchorage, and is scarcely navigable. To enter the port, a ship must work across it; which is in some measure dangerous, as there are many rocks, some of which are eight or ten feet only below the surface of the water, which renders it necessary to have a pilot; to obtain whom you first come to anchor in what is called the Back-bay, under the fort of Trincomale, where there is very good ground. Of all the creeks and bays of the establishments, this would be the best, if there was any shelter in the bad season during the north-east monsoon; but it is then not tenable, and you must get into port.

During the south-west monsoon it is the only place frequented by ships, because there is anchorage on each tack; and when they wish to depart, they may be out at sea in an instant without diffi-

culty. Nevertheless, as this little bay is not sheltered, there is always a great swell in it, which makes the vessels roll, and renders it impossible to careen them.

The inner part of the great bay affords an anchorage near the river Cotiar; but there is this inconvenience attending it, that frequently, during the south-west monsoon, a vessel may beat a whole day without getting in so far: in which case, as there is no anchorage any where else, it is obliged to return to the Back-bay to recommence on the morrow its attempts. An equal difficulty is found during the north-east monsoon in getting out; and this is the more to be dreaded, as, after a whole day spent in the attempt, night may bring on a storm, and expose the vessel to the danger of perishing on the coast, from which it may not have been able to make a sufficient offing.

When we have succeeded in getting to the further end of the bay, we put about for the harbour, and come to anchor at Ostembourg-point. The shore of that mountain is so bold, that a boat run aground at the head will have fourteen fathom water at the rudder: at half a cable's length there will be thirty-three fathom.

This basin is very improperly called the harbour: it is rather an immense bay, where ships are moored across, and where there is a heavy swell, though it is landlocked on every side; but the bay is so extensive, that the leeward side is always very much agitated. The middle of the bay has a soft clay bottom, in which anchors sink so deep as to render it impossible to recover them. Further on, towards the inmost part of the harbour, is a rock of no small extent; but the bay is so large and so little frequented, that there is more than sufficient room for such vessels as wish to enter it. The inconvenience of

not being able to get in without beating to windward must be extremely disagreeable to a vessel in any kind of distress. Should she be leaky, with only a few hands, exhausted by fatigue, the inconvenience must be considerably increased by being obliged to spend a day or more in tacking to arrive at the careening-place; and if the rigging be bad, this becomes impossible: she must then of necessity bring up in a great depth of water in the Back-bay, till assistance arrives, by which she may be enabled to enter the harbour; which must greatly retard her operations.

There is the same disadvantage for a ship of war after an engagement. If totally dismasted, it is impossible for her to get in under jury-masts; and if the hull also be impaired, she cannot obtain the smallest relief; for in the Back-bay, the only place where she could be moored, there would be no possibility of her refitting. In addition to these inconveniences the vastness of the harbour must be considered. During the south-west monsoon vessels are careened at the greater island; but if a breeze spring up in the offing or in the north-east, their position must be instantly altered, for the sea swells so suddenly, that they would be in considerable danger. During the other monsoon the careening is done in Nicholson's-bay, but that is no better sheltered; and in *l'Anse des Cours*, where there is also anchorage, there is the same disadvantage. These different places, besides, are above three miles distant from each other, and six from the fort of Trincomale. How difficult, or at least expensive, it would be, provided they could mutually assist one another, to form establishments in each, may easily be conceived. Some miserable storehouses, indeed, have been constructed at the foot of the mountain of Ostembourg, and, supposing an establishment were

formed there, sufficient for the operations of a considerable port, the difficulty would remain to find a place where ships might be built and launched. For the rest, the principal disadvantage of this port is the want of good water : except a small spring at the foot of the mountain of Ostembourg, towards Nicholson's-bay, there is none scarcely to be found. The other springs afford but little, and are drained by the natives. During the war of 1778 we were obliged to supply ourselves from the river Cotiar, which is nine miles distant, as all the wells about Trincomale were brackish and unwholesome. Notwithstanding all this, the harbour is an inestimable benefit ; for there is no other in this part of India, and the possession of it is of the highest importance.

The environs of Trincomale are uncultivated. About fifteen miles from the fort is a fountain of warm water. It jets out in two places. One of the sources is too hot to be borne ; the other is of a moderate heat ; and twenty feet from the latter rises a spring of cold water.

The woods with which this country is covered are near the town. It would be imprudent to enter them unarmed, as they abound in buffaloes, elephants, and tigers, to which Buffon gives the name of *ounce* : there are also a great number of monkeys there. The river Cotiar is near a lake, where the wild elephants frequently resort to bathe. Our sailors often had skirmishes with them.

The southern coast of the great bay is terminated by Sale-point ; it abounds in peacocks and quails, but there is very little shooting, on account of the wild beasts, which there is danger of falling in with. Mr. Sonnerat found there what is called the primitive cock, and which Buffon maintains to be the golden pheasant. I saw one of them in Mr. Casenove's garden at Pondicherry. Mr. Sonnerat shewed me anoth.

er stuffed, a most beautiful bird, the feathers of which were all covered with gold-coloured spots. He has given a description of it that is accurate, to which the reader may refer.

On a small rock called the Chapel are oysters, and it is the only place where they are to be found. Cattle are so scarce at Trincomale, that a small piece of beef is a dish of the greatest value. While the French were masters of it, they introduced a species of goats, called maroon dogs, which at that time formed the chief supply of the kitchen. But these flocks are insensibly exhausted; and when I returned there, nothing was to be had but fish and cheese. The commandant having done me the honour of inviting me to dinner, gave me nothing else, and for drink all he had to offer his guests was grog made of arrack and water. At the dessert indeed there were served up, as a dainty, a bottle of brandy and another of gin, accompanied with the same demonstrations as are used at Paris in offering a glass of hermitage or tokay. In a word, such was the misery of the country, that even a candle was a luxury, and there was nothing but oil of cocoa to substitute in its stead.

Ceylon may in a manner be considered as the country of cocoa nuts, the island being almost covered with the trees: it also produces very excellent rice, and towards the southern part, in the neighbourhood of *Punto Gallo* and Colombo, the Dutch cultivate sugar. These three articles together produce a considerable trade; they serve to make arrack, of which a great quantity is exported to different parts of India, and cocoa-hair, which is used in forming cables for ships.

The manners of this canton being nearly the same as those of the coast of India, I shall pass on to Pondicherry, taking a slight glance at the village of *Karikal*.

This possession is a small aldée to the south of the Danish settlement at Trinkebar. The French government keeps a military commandant there, with a detachment of troops of colour. Its principal product is *nely*, a name given to rice when it is simply threshed, without being disengaged from its outer skin. This nely serves for the consumption of Pondicherry. The establishment of Karikal, in common with other parts of the coast, makes salt, which the French carry to Bengal. The government of Pondicherry gives *bons*, or permits, every year, to transport it into that province, to the amount, in quantity, of eight hundred thousand maunds, or sixty millions weight: it must be delivered to the English company, who engage to take it at a certain price before agreed on, and pay in ready money: if any be sent without such permit, it is confiscated; or if more than eight hundred thousand maunds, the quantity stipulated by the contract, be sent, it is also seized: any persons attempting to introduce salt into Bengal, and selling it to the natives, are punished as defrauders. These permits form a part of the riches of the French government, in addition to its territorial revenue. A portion of them is set apart for the support of widows, orphans, and the poor. The rest are sold to individuals, and the produce goes into the coffers of government.

From the southern point of the coast of Coromandel to the Palm-tree Point, which terminates the bay of Balaffore, it is impossible to make good a landing in European boats. The ocean, which, for a long continuity of ages has successively retired, both from the mountains of the Gauts, and the plain on which they are elevated, is daily raising the coast, which it insensibly abandons; it is continually amassing sand and wrecks of marine pro-

ductions over its whole extent, of which it gradually forms a bank, destined at some future day to become the coast, against which it will again throw up other banks. These sands form what is called the bar; against which the sea is almost constantly beating with great fury. The extremities of the waves which pass over the bank lodge between it and the shore, where they form new waves. The alternate movement of the surge, which tends to undermine the shore, and the retrograde movement of these waves, seeking to re-unite themselves with the mass of the sea, occasion an excavation between the bank and the coast. This space, about pistol-shot wide, makes what is called the *ressac* of the bar. As it is only the top of the wave which passes over the bank forming the bar; the depth of water is not more than a foot, and is often less. The surge sometimes rises considerably above it, and breaks with violence. An European boat, attempting this passage, would run the risk of touching on the bank, and of being swallowed up by the waves. To prevent this, flat-bottomed boats called *chelin-gues*, are constructed, without beams, and which have the planks sewed together, instead of being nailed. This formation gives them more elasticity, allows them to bend when they are struck by the surge, and prevents them from being so easily stove as other boats: they are so flat, that they do not draw when loaded above six inches water, and some not even so much; they are extremely high at the sides, seldom less than four feet, so that when the surf overtakes them, as it cannot reach over the side, they are in less danger of being filled. They are generally manned with nine Blacks, and when the sea runs high with eleven. The person who steers stands up abaft, and is furnished with an extremely large oar, with which he endeavours to

keep the end of the boat always towards the wave. Long experience points out to them that all waves are not of equal strength, and that after three heavy ones there will at least succeed one less violent. They watch their opportunity and are seldom deceived. Floating along on that which they deem to be the most manageable, they follow it up, with the foam constantly a-head of their chelingue. The rest of the wave, still swelling, affords them sufficient water to clear the bank, and they arrive thus in perfect safety, pursued by another wave, which breaks behind them upon the bar, but unable to overtake them, is no impediment to their attaining the landing-place. Great, however, as their skill may be, they do not always succeed; sometimes they are deceived in the swell, or they steer badly, or else are not in good trim; and they are then surprised by the surf, upset, and every thing contained in the chelingue is tumbled into the sea. As they are all excellent swimmers, they lay hold of the Europeans, and save them, but the goods are in danger of being lost.

To guard against a misfortune like this, when large sums of money are confided to them, or other articles of value, they tie a rope to them, and fix at the end of it a buoy, by which they know where the effects are, and are able to recover them.

When the sea runs so high that they are apprehensive of an accident, they add to these precautions that of providing a *catimaron* to accompany their chelingue. This is a bundle of three pieces of wood tied together with cords. Their width prevents them from upsetting, and, as they have no interior capaciousness, they cannot sink. The Blacks seat themselves on this sort of raft, with their legs bent under them, sometimes relieving themselves from so tiresome an attitude by letting them hang

over in the water. There have been instances of sharks carrying off some of these men from the reef when in their general attitude, whether on their knees or sitting down; the sea washes them to the middle of their bodies; the only dry part is the head, on which therefore they carry the papers that are confided to them, in a cap made for the purpose.

On vessels of this frail description the natives of India, and particularly the islanders of the Andamans and the Straits, undertake long voyages. They put a mast to this wretched catimaron, and fix to it a weight, which serves to counterbalance an enormous sail, and prevent their upsetting; thus equipped, they make way with astonishing celerity. If any accident happens, they have recourse to swimming, and, like so many fishes, as if the element was natural to them, put their machine to rights, on which they seat themselves again, and continue their voyage.

When we arrive on the coast of India, the first objects we discern are the flags of the town we approach: they are seen floating on the sea, as though they had emerged from its bosom. The coast is low, that it is not perceptible till we are near it, the mountains being too distant from the shore to be seen out at sea.

This plain, which extends from the borders of the sea to the Gauts, is so flat, that the rivers have scarcely any current, and even at their mouths are so little rapid, that the sea throws up a bar in the same manner as in other parts; thus closing the rivers, and leaving the water to filter through the sand. In the rainy seasons they swell, rise above the bank by which they are closed, and open for themselves a passage, which the sea again fills up as soon as the body of water is run off. I speak, as

may be supposed, of small rivers only, and not of those which are deep enough to admit ships.

This want of elevation in the coasts but ill agrees with the supposed antiquity of the country. The number of rivers, the lakes by which they are supplied, the soil, that in many places is nothing but sand, all seem to indicate, that, at no very remote period, it was covered by the ocean. Not the least elevation can be discovered till we arrive at Pondicherry, and thence, to the north of Sadras, only a few hills are perceptible, which must have been islands when the ocean covered the plain.

If we consider the shallowness of the gulf which separates Ceylon from the coast, and the chain of rocks that re-unites them, over which nothing but pirogues can now pass, we may venture to affirm, without temerity, that in the course of twelve centuries, Ceylon will be no longer an island, allowing to this part of the world the same progressive diminution as we have observed in the Baltic, namely, forty-five inches to a century. The calculation would be just; for there is only nine fathom water in the deepest part of the gulf. By admitting a similar anterior diminution in the ocean, it would follow, that India is not now as it was in the time of Alexander, and that the plain on which Pondicherry and Madras are built was then under water.

There are monuments of men existing in this country, however, which bear marks of great antiquity. I here anticipate my excursion, in order to present facts at variance with the system, that a juster opinion may be formed.

In ascending the Godwarin, about nine miles above Yanaon, we meet with a small Indian town called Cota, the residence of a raja. Hence directing our course a little to the eastward, we arrive at

a considerable Moorish aldée named Datcharom. The situation of this place is not elevated; on the contrary it is surrounded with water, and consequently could not have been freed from the empire of the ocean till some ages after the present coast: yet in this aldée we find a very beautiful pagoda, which must formerly have been a strong place; it is defended by a wide and deep ditch, the degraded sides of which, notwithstanding their slope, exhibit proofs of antiquity. We arrive at the edifice by two bridges. The pagoda, like all others, is built in the centre of a vast court, the circuit of which struck me with astonishment. The wall is so ancient, that it has three times undergone a thorough repair; the difference of the mason work cannot escape the eye of an attentive and experienced observer; as a necessary consequence of the injuries of time, it has now fallen into ruins. The two upper parts of the masonry have nothing remarkable in them but their antique appearance; they are composed of brick. That which supports them is also of brick, but in better condition; and the Malabar style is discernible in two mouldings which time has spared: the whole rests on a foundation of granite of the greatest beauty, of which the level has not given way a single inch. All the foundation of the western front, as well as that of the southern, is completely preserved; the architecture is visibly Greek, for the plinth, the swell above it, and the astragal, are as correctly displayed as if done by an architect of the present day; the whole is completely laid out by line, and calculated to engage the attention of a spectator. When we compare this monument with the pagodas of Chalambarum and Jagrenaut, both constructed in the Malabar taste, and passing for antiquities, it is difficult to account for a piece of Greek architecture thus

appearing in the midst of a country where no other trace of it is to be found, except in European establishments, and there even no work of granite of this kind exists. I have seen in this country many *chauderies* and other buildings constructed of a similar stone, but they were all of the Malabar or Indian architecture, without the smallest Greek vestige presenting itself. The Moors of Datcharom have the highest idea of the antiquity of this pagoda ; it existed, they say, long before they settled on this spot, and they have suffered it to remain for the use of the Hindoos living with them in the village. Their tradition informs them of the erection of the two superior pieces of masonry ; but they are ignorant of the date of the third, and have no idea of the age of the foundation on which the whole stands.

Whoever was the architect that built this monument, he must have taken every possible precaution to do it with solidity, considering that he had to work in the midst of water ; and he succeeded, for the building has remained to this day. It is fair to presume, that it was erected in times anterior to Indian architecture, as it would otherwise have been conformable to the manner of the country. At the time of the first repair the Malabar architecture was known, for it is done in the Indian style.

If this was a Greek edifice, as it appears to be, how are we to reconcile the remote period of its foundation with the recent one, when the sea is supposed to have quitted these shores ? The country in general is so low, that a tempest is sufficient to lay it under water ; and instances of it are not wanting. In the year 1789 all the country of Coringui and the neighbouring parts were deluged by three waves, which a storm raised above the common level : the water reached even as far as Yanaon. The sea rose above its ordinary limits, and carried a ves-

fel * into the plains within three miles of Coringui. When these three waves had spent their force, the sea returned to its bed, and the waters ran off. An event like this proves beyond dispute the trifling elevation of the country, and consequently its late existence: how then can it happen, that at Datcharom, in the neighbourhood of Coringui, a monument should be found bearing every mark of the remotest antiquity?

If we admit with some geographers, that in the early ages of the world the peninsula of India was an island, which I am far from denying, it must follow, that the plain, extending from the sea-coast to the foot of the Gauts, was still under water at that epoch, as it is much lower than the country which formed the strait between the then island and what at the present day forms the Mogul, properly so called. On this hypothesis would not the Gauts have been the cradle of the Bramins? It appears to me that the affirmative is probable. These mountains must have existed from the first ages of the world: they are primitive, that is to say, granitic: they incontestibly form one of the ramifications of the chain which constitutes, so to speak, the timber-work of the earth: they would seem to end at Cape Comorin. But I am not afraid of being taxed with exaggeration by those who have made this part of the globe their study, when I affirm, that to me they do not appear to terminate till they reach the island of St. Paul to the southward of the Mauritius and the Isle of Bourbon; and the only reason why we do not see them rise again between the island of St. Paul and the Pole, is, that the ice has prevented us from penetrating so far, or that the mountains which continue this chain are not sufficiently elevated to appear above the surface of the sea. It is

* *The Greyhound*, captain Bourdé Delavillaubert.

this same chain which, plunging under the waves, re-appears at intervals, and shows the peaks of its mountains, of which the summits form the isles of France, Bourbon, Rodrigues, and the vast archipelago, hitherto so little explored, which covers the sea between those islands and the Maldives. The Maldives, the Laccadives, and even Ceylon, are also a continuation of this chain: of Ceylon, however, I speak from conjecture only, as I have not observed it. The mountains of the coast which I have visited are all calcareous; but I conceive that the middle chain of the island is granitic. In short, if we admit the principle, now considered as indisputable, of the successive retreat of the ocean, we must necessarily infer, that in the course of a considerable number of ages the Mauritius and the Isle of Bourbon will terminate Asia to the southward.

This opinion is very far from being hypothetical. These two islands are already nearly joined to the continent. Their archipelago and that of the Maldives are nothing more than a continued mass of mountains connected together under the water at no great depth, between which the sea still preserves its channels. In a word, to the eye of a philosopher, this continent is already exposed to view: the plains alone remain submerged; and even these perhaps wait only for the epoch, when the slow and gradual retreat of the fluid element shall leave them dry, to rise from the bosom of the ocean; or they may be indebted for their existence to some volcanic explosion. So great a space cannot be entirely without pyrites: the isle of Bourbon burns already; and it is to be presumed, that the water, effecting at last a passage to those contained in the bowels of the earth that still supports the yoke of the ocean, some explosion will result, and produce either the wreck of the existing islands or the formation of new countries: we ought rather to incline

to the latter hypothesis, as the existing mountains form together such a mass of granite, that the explosion would more easily throw up the bottom of the sea to its surface, than shake and swallow up so great a body, the resistance of which is augmented by its adhesion to what is near it, and by the union of all the parts of which it is constituted.

But to return to my voyage.

On arriving before Pondicherry the eye is shocked with the ruins that present themselves. The church and the capuchin convent, destroyed during the siege of M. de Bellcombe, have not been repaired; many other houses on the seashore, to the eastward, in like manner destroyed, are a heap of ruins; and the whole exhibits a mournful and sickening spectacle. But when we are landed the scene changes. As we enter the place of arms we are struck with its grandeur; the governor's palace adds to its beauty, and gives it a noble appearance; and if every thing corresponded with this beginning, Pondicherry would be the finest town in India.

It is divided into two parts, the Black Town and the White Town: the latter spreads along the sea-coast, and is again divided into two parts, the north and south. The tower bearing the flag-staff is in the middle, and separates the two quarters.

The Black Town is separated from the White by a ditch running through the whole extent of Pondicherry. It reaches to the ramparts, and contains a population of nearly eighty thousand souls, and a cathedral belonging to a convent of French jesuits, the bishop of which belongs to that society. This church, newly built in the modern taste, is the only one in India that is tolerable.

The Whitetown is very inconsiderable. Its length comprehends the whole front of the place on the seashore; but its width from the shore to the ditch,

which separates it from the Black Town, is not more than three hundred toises. This space is filled with handsome houses, but few of them are more than one story high : it contains a parish-church, the duty of which is done by the capuchins of the French mission.

The streets, as in every other part of India, are without pavement, and are most of them nothing but sand. As the houses are all white-washed, it is extremely disagreeable to walk there during the heat of the day, on account of the reverberation. To remedy this inconvenience, it is customary to be carried ; and the pay of servants is so little, that almost every person has the means of hiring a palanquin and carriers. So many travellers have written on this subject, that I shall not enter into particulars : the reader may consult Sonnerat, Niebuhr, and others. The short details I shall give are those of which the authors who have preceded me have not deigned to speak.

A captain or traveller finds, immediately on landing, if he has money, every thing necessary for his accommodation in the country, without any other trouble than that of choosing. This is all comprised in the person of a dobachi. The crowd of these people is prodigious : they are followed by a number of boys, and form a rabble which it is difficult to get rid of. The moment you land from the chelingue they beset you on all sides. Some seize upon your luggage, others present you with certificates of faithful services to captains or individuals in private situations, who have employed them, and each seems to claim a right to the possession of the new-comer, to the exclusion of the rest : those who have the articles of luggage make a parade of them, and range themselves near the stranger with an air of satisfaction. If he seems to distinguish any one

in particular, a dispute instantly takes place, and an uproar is raised, which the beating of the sea against the bar tends to augment. A traveller, landing on the coast of India for the first time, is at a loss how to act. At every step he takes, to proceed towards the town, an hundred arms are stretched forth with certificates to oblige him to choose. In proportion as his embarrassment increases, the Blacks, who perceive he is a novice, become importunate: at length, quite tired out, he makes a choice, and instantly the mob disperses. The *dobachi* chosen is generally the first domestic of a rich man: sent by his master, he immediately falls upon the multitude with his cane, seizes, in the most brutal manner, on the effects which the traveller has landed, places some subaltern servants to clear the way through the crowd, brings the stranger to a palanquin, and takes him off as his prey to any inn he may think proper. The *dobachi* in chief then comes to pay his respects; and, in the course of the day, the new comer is furnished with a house, goods, servants of every description, and a well-supplied kitchen; in a word, every thing is provided without giving him the trouble even to express a wish; for often he is ignorant of the customs to which it is necessary to conform. The *dobachi* takes possession of the money, merchandise, and every thing belonging to his master's affairs: the former is put into the hands of a cashier called a *seraff*. The profit which the *dobachi* derives from this money enables him to defray his master's expenses; it is also customary, if you do a great deal of business, for him to make all payments during your stay in the country.

There are servants for every purpose. The four principal casts of India are subdivided into many small ones; and these different sub-divisions are governed by prejudices that will not permit them

to engage alike in ignoble occupations. All their services have different shades ; and the gradation of those who have to perform them is very distinct. The lowest casts are the scavengers and the sweepers, called *taligarchi*. The shoemakers follow next, and are extremely abased by opinion ; then the domestics, placed near the master for his personal wants, such as washing his feet and buckling his shoes, the carriers, and those who hold the parasol ; and next the barber, the nose and ear cleaner, and the nail-cutter. These people refine on every thing capable of producing agreeable sensations. I never found any thing more pleasant than having my ears cleaned by a Black of Pondicherry : they finish the operation by introducing a small piece of steel, which they cause to vibrate by a gentle movement of the fingers, the sonorous noise occasioned by which, produces a delicious tremor. After this servant comes the hair-dresser, then the *masser*. Massing is also a sensation which these people know how to produce.

After living some time in the climate of India, we are exhausted by perspiration ; the great heat occasions lassitude, we are scarcely able to move about, the humours have no circulation, and the blood becomes thick ; we feel heavy, are oppressed with an inclination to sleep, and fall into a state of apathy, which terminates in some malady, and often in ulcers. The baths are not always sufficient to restore the benumbed fibres to their wonted tone : but all these accidents are prevented by undergoing the operation of massing. We accustom ourselves to it by degrees, beginning gently at first : but after five or six months it is used more vigorously. The person on whom the operation is performed lies on a bed ; a servant kneads him all over like a piece of soft dough, taking care to dwell particularly on the muscles of the arms, legs, &c.

The use of this ceremony is to make the blood and humours circulate freely ; it produces an agreeable sleep ; after which we rise active and nimble, without inconvenience, pain, numbness, or headach.

Next to the maffer comes the *valet-de-chambre*, and then the person who has the care of the clothes, linen, &c. When a valet-de-chambre gives his master a shirt, the writer gravely sets it down in the account, shuts the trunk, takes the key of it with great importance, and adds it to a bunch which he proudly carries on one shoulder : the larger is the size of this bunch of keys, of so much the greater importance does the servant think himself.

After him comes the *hooka-badar*, who prepares the hooka, and presents it to his master when he wishes to smoke. A description of this instrument has been given in the works of almost all travellers in this country. The grand merit of an hooka-badar is to assist his master when he smokes in his palanquin or on horse-back ; for which purpose he must carry the bottle and a chafing-dish, while his master holds the end of the serpentine tube. In this manner he keeps up with the bearers of the palanquin, or the horse, without the least inconvenience : the fire, the tobacco, the water, are all carried with so much precaution, that a person smokes as commodiously as in an apartment.

After the hooka-badar comes the *pion* or soldier. This personage is of the Moorish cast, and is sometimes valiant, often quarrelsome, and always proud of his post. He wears a bandoleer or shoulder-belt, with a plate of silver, on which are engraved the arms or ciphers of the person in whose service he is. His employment is to execute little commissions, and accompany his master when he goes out ; he is armed either with a sabre or pike, and runs before

the palanquin, driving away the crowd, and crying incessantly, in the Moorish tongue, to clear the road. The number of pions is increased according to the luxury intended to be displayed. A tradesman has usually two ; while those who in any way belong to government have four or five. A tradesman, borne rapidly along in his palanquin, preceded by his pions and four carriers in relay, accompanied by his hooka-badar and umbrella-holder, followed by waiters and writers who never quit him, making a great noise and upsetting the crowd on their passage, has no longer the appearance, in the eyes of a new comer, of a person in this station of life, but would be rather taken for some rich and powerful nobleman.

The next most important personage is the porter. This man thinks himself invested with a great charge : it is true he guards the door with so scrupulous an attention, that he frequently stops the servants of the house when they are going out with a parcel, unless they give him the countersign to let them pass.

To these must be added the cook and his assistants ; the *compradore*, whose business is to purchase provisions ; the butler and steward, and the person who waits at table, which complete the crowd of domestics attached to the immediate service of a man moderately rich.

After a host like this one would imagine the list must be finished : but no ; there are besides, the *dobachi* in chief, and three or four upper servants, as many subaltern writers, and a multitude of young Indians belonging to him, to learn the trade, and who form together a very considerable retinue. The *dobachi* enters alone into the chamber or closet of the master, followed by a writer to take orders, make notes, or present accounts. As this man has

the management of every thing, an European merchant has only to inspect his proceedings and make known his wishes. This little morning audience over, he is dismissed, and the house remains crowded with his suite: they take possession of every corner, and, sitting on the ground, are employed in writing, observing all the while so profound a silence, that the master, to be heard, has only to clap his hands softly in his apartment, and instantly the whole troop is in motion. In paying a morning-visit, it becomes a study how to be able to make way in the antichamber, or hall, through the midst of all these writers, surrounded with their papers, without treading some of them under foot. The Indians begin to write on silk paper, which they procure from China. In general, it sucks up a great deal of ink: but they have not yet adopted the custom of making their books of this paper. They commonly write on the fan-palm leaf, using for the purpose an iron bodkin, which they move with the right hand, and conduct with the thumb-nail of the left, holding the leaf in the hand without resting it. When they wish to make a book, they cut a number of leaves of the same length, make holes in them at each end, and file them: to the cords two thin boards, wider and longer than the leaves, are fastened, and which serve to preserve them. They shut the book, and fasten it by drawing the cords tight: there are books of this kind extremely voluminous.

The Moors and Malabars have different characters. The Moorish language is derived from the Persian, of which it has taken the alphabet. This language is much used in every part of Asia, China excepted. The soldiers and sailors all speak it.

The Malabar language is that of the country; it has its particular characters. The study of it is by no means disagreeable; and it has literary works

numerous enough to afford any one, who is desirous of instructing himself, sufficient reading.

But again, for every thing relating to the languages, customs, and religion of India, I refer to Sonnerat. It is difficult after this author to say any thing new. All that can be done is to indicate the facts, in order to put the reader in the right road.

I shall not treat of the different casts, that object being so well known as to render it unnecessary; but to those with which we are acquainted, there is a new one to be added, that increases considerably, and perhaps will end one day in over-running all the rest, the Bramins excepted.

This is the cast produced by the alliance of Europeans with the natives of every other cast. The first unions of this kind were formed by the Portuguese at the time of their brilliant conquests. The race has taken their name, and is known by it. This Portuguese filiation has not always continued white; some branches are again become black, while others have so nearly approached the European complexion, as at first sight not to be known; which is the less surprising, as the Indians, with the exception of colour, have nothing in their features to distinguish them from Europeans. I shall take this opportunity to say a few words on the different people I have seen on the globe.

All men are indisputably of one species, as they can all procreate together; but the races are visibly different. I have observed four distinct ones, which subdivide into several branches. The first race is that of Europe and Asia: it appears to be demonstrated that the origin is the same, whatever be the colour which varies it.

This colour becomes deeper in proportion as it approaches the equator, which to me is a proof,

that it is owing to the climate. I will admit the black net-work found by anatomists between the skin and the epidermis of a negro ; I will even admit, that the same particularity is also met with in a Black of Asia, that is, in an Indian of the low cast ; for it cannot belong to the race of the Bramins, whose colour is a pale yellow, a little less dark than that of the Mulattoes, and of a fresher hue.

But even allowing, that this net-work is found in an Indian, I should not the less be inclined to conclude, that the climate had alone produced it, and that by a higher latitude it would be dispersed in a few generations, even without intercourse with the whites. The Blacks, moreover, I mean those that are absolutely so, are not very numerous in Asia. Few are found except in the peninsula of India, at Pegu, and in the islands ; for as soon as we reach the latitude of twenty degrees, the species begins to assume a clearer teint. In other respects, the features are the same as ours. The leading ones are moderately thick lips, protuberant nose, long eyes, soft long hair, and a beard.

This race in Europe takes three very distinct shades, that of the east, that of the west, and the Laplanders. The first have preserved something of the Greek countenance, which is not so much altered but it may be recognized. In Asia, the principal shades are those of the Whites, the Bramins and the copper-coloured, the Blacks and the Chinese. The most striking features of the latter are, the nose less protuberant, the eyes small and placed obliquely. All these sub-divisions are, in my opinion, of one common origin ; the climate alone has imprinted on them the difference by which they are characterized.

The second race is that of Africa. This is perfectly distinct, and must have had a different ori-

gin. Its principal characters are generally a black complexion without polish, the nose flat and broad, with little projection, round eyes, thick lips, and curling woolly hair and beard. There has been only one sub-division of this race hitherto discovered, which is that of the Hottentots, who are of a colour less deep, and who have individuals among them inclining in some degree to a copper-colour; but in other respects the characteristics are the same. The curly wool, in particular, appears to be the principal attribute of the African race. A celebrated writer of our own time has asserted, that the cradle of the human race was in the flat part of Tartary. I shall not contest this origin of the Europeans and Asiatics, for I am persuaded they have sprung from a common stock; but I cannot so readily believe, that Africa owes its population to the same source. The Isthmus of Suez has visibly served as a bed for the sea, in times when Africa could not have been unpeopled. That great island must have had a race peculiar to itself in ages when navigation was too little known for us to suppose, that men could have been dispersed over the globe by means of their ships. We will admit, with some authors, that the primitive inhabitants were enabled to descend from Caucasus, and spread themselves over the plains in proportion as they were left dry. But we have no reason to refuse a similar means of population to Africa, who might also have had her Caucasus, whence the source of the African race derived its birth. We are not sufficiently acquainted with that part of the world to form solid conjectures respecting it, but are obliged to confine our observations to the race of men that inhabit it. This race is certainly different from ours. The origin cannot possibly be the same; to prove it so, it would be necessary that an African family, transf-

ported into Europe, should assume, without mixing with the race of Europe, European features, that the hair should become straight, &c. ; and so of a European family transported into Africa.

We do not find, however, that the hair of the Creoles of the Cape of Good Hope, whose families have lived three or four generations in the country, becomes changed into wool. This wool is so strongly impressed on the African race, that even when they intermix with Europeans, it is the last characteristic that disappears. It clings so closely to the race, it distinguishes them so perfectly from all others, that even in thirty-four degrees of latitude it loses nothing of its force ; it is still the same wool. This peculiarity so completely belongs to Africa, that it confines itself within her limits, and does not pass beyond them. The Spaniards, separated by a strait of only one-and-twenty miles, have long shining hair. The Arabs too, who border on Africa, who are merely divided by the straits of Babelmandel, have in like manner all long hair. When the marks are so distinct, how is it possible not to acknowledge that the origin is different* ?

* I know that Mr. Bruce says, Vol. I. page 172, that the Kennoufs, a people inhabiting the banks of the Nile, beyond the second cataract of Nubia, have hair, not wool ; but he did not inquire, whether the colony is indigenous, or whether it came from Asia. All the country, as we know, is over-run with Arabs ; and there is no reason for refusing to believe that the Kennoufs are of Arabian origin ; so that this fact, which the author's reputation does not permit us to doubt, proves nothing against our system.

The same traveller assures us, page 342, that the inhabitants to the southward of Cape Heli, between Yemen and the states of the scherif of Mecca, have wool instead of hair. This also does not subvert what I have advanced : to overcome my opinion, individuals with woolly hair must be found all over the earth ; intermingled with others that have long hair ; but while I see them confined to a small distinct colony, I consider the circumstance as a new proof in my favour, and infer, that they have a different origin from the inhabitants of the country in the midst of whom

The third race is principally found towards Darien, but its individuals are much less numerous. These are the Albinos, who are chiefly distinguished by the dead whiteness of their skin, by flax instead of hair on their heads, and by little round eyes incapable of supporting the light of day.

It would not be easy to decide on the origin of these miserable beings, to whom nature has refused so much. She has endowed them, it is true, with the faculty of thinking and speaking; but the latter quality is so imperfect among them, that it rather resembles a murmur than an articulation: even at a short distance the movement of their lips is all that can be perceived: no sound reaches the ear, unless we are near enough to touch them.

As to their faculty of thinking, if we may judge from their indolent mode of life, resulting perhaps from a sense of their weakness, it is by no means profound: indeed, reflecting on such actions of theirs with which we are acquainted, we are forced to admit, that they have no more reason than is barely sufficient to enable them to avoid what is injurious.

This unhappy race, weak and defenceless, no longer consists, but of a few scattered individuals, escaped from wild beasts and men, by whom they have been hunted. Some of them have arrived

they are encompassed. On the coast of Arabia we meet with Abyssinians at every step. Is the inestimable author I have mentioned sure, that the canton of Cape Heli may not have given an asylum to an emigration from Abyssinia, either during the wars for the establishment of Mahometanism, or before that period? His observations, though generally admirable, require perhaps sometimes to be examined closely; for it is possible he may have relied on a bad compiler, for the care of putting his notes in order. Ought we not, for instance, to place in the rank of doubtful observations that which leads him to give $24^{\circ} 45''$ north as the latitude of Syenne, which is close to the spot where Pliny and Strabo say the well was dug directly under the tropic?

among us ; and, if we were rash enough to form a judgment of nature by such specimens, we must suppose, that she had only thrown a few of this race vaguely on the globe, without permitting them to form a colony of their own : at least, the utmost endeavours of travellers have never been able to discover one. A few of these wretched beings, of both sexes, have been met with on the coast, where they appeared to live on fish, and have been supposed, unjustly perhaps, to possess scarcely more intellect than the oysters which they tear from the rocks.

If this race of men was ever numerous, it has almost entirely disappeared ; for there now exists no more instances than is just sufficient to preserve the remembrance of it : it is, besides, too little known for it to be determined, whether it has any subdivisions, or even for us to say any thing positive respecting it.

It has been imagined, that the physical and moral state of these beings was occasioned by sickness ; some have even thought, that it was the appearance of the disorder itself : but these are merely conjectures ; and we ought to consider them as a distinct race, till we have acquired information that may do away all doubt on the subject.

The fourth race is that of America. A people, spreading under a sky so varied as to comprehend all the zones, must be supposed to have numerous subdivisions ; and in reality they extend almost to infinity : but, with the exception of a few hordes of savages to the northward, they are principally distinguished by having no beard.

This mark is as striking and indelible as the wool of the Africans ; and it appears to me as incontestably to prove, that their origin is different from ours.

The newness of this continent does not seem to me an undeniable proof, that its inhabitants came

from what is called the old world : the plains alone have the appearance of being recently freed from the waters of the ocean ; but there is nothing to induce us to believe, that the mountains should have been submerged when ours were dry. If the Pichincha and the Chimborazo bear evident marks of the residence of the ocean on their most elevated peaks, our Alps present the same testimonials ; and to me it seems reasonable to believe, that the mountains of America were the secret residence of the first individuals of the American race ; as Caucasus, perhaps Atlas, and other mountains, have been the birth-place of the different races which now people Europe and Africa. In a word, the hair and beard are, in my opinion, marks by which Nature has separated the three grand divisions of the inhabitants of the earth (for the Albinos are so few in number, that I can hardly consider them with the others) ; the livery which she has ordained them to wear is not to be effaced ; it has subsisted from their origin, and will be an eternal monument to attest the difference of the sources whence they have derived their existence.

From the system of which I have drawn the outlines, it is not surprising that the Portuguese race, by intermarriages, should be so perfectly assimilated with that of India, as, in the course of several generations, to be no longer distinguished.

Among the ladies of Pondicherry, there are few that can boast of a white origin without mixture. If the filiation were in all instances transmitted by the whites, each branch of a family being of the same degree of fairness, the inconvenience would be small. But it will happen, that of two sisters, one will have married a Portuguese or some other White, and the other a Negro ; and the second cousins may thus be some very white and others

very black. The Whites may arrive at a considerable fortune, and the others remain in a state of servitude. This happens every day; and, as an example of it, I shall mention a person in office, a man of estimable character, who, having espoused a woman of equal rank, but whose father was of the party-coloured tribe, was the first to jest upon the subject; and he did it so freely that it was a frequent cause of domestic quarrel. One of his pleasantries was, that he was fearful of correcting his servants, when they committed a fault, and that he always spoke to them civilly, from the idea, that among them might be some cousin-german of his wife.

I knew but two families at Pondicherry of perfectly pure blood; the children of the one were two sons who had married women of the country; the other had daughters only, who cannot perpetuate their name; so that in twenty years Pondicherry can boast but of a single family whose European filiation can be proved without mixture. These alliances are become so common, the portion of inhabitants known by the name of the Portuguese cast is at present so considerable, and continues to increase with such rapidity, that, by aid of the missionaries, it will eventually terminate, to all appearance, in over-running the other casts, with the exception of the Bramins, who are scrupulously attentive not only to prevent alliances with strangers, but also to avoid communication with them; and so far do they carry this, as even to break the vases, in which, by the laws of hospitality, they have given them to drink, when occasion has demanded it.

Ever remember, they say to their children from their infancy, that you are born to command other men. This lesson is repeated every day, and contributes perhaps as much as any thing else to gen-

erate in them the idea they entertain of their superiority over every other cast.

Be this as it may, the Bramins are in possession of eminent employments, great wealth, and unbounded esteem. They were probably indebted for this ascendancy at first to their physical powers and their arms, and they preserved it by their virtues and understanding. The consideration they still enjoy rests on a similar foundation, the knowledge they possess. It is certainly from the opinion which is formed of their virtue and sagacity, that they are placed in the first rank; but this is a matter of opinion only, and the first revolution in principles may do away the supremacy. They have already lost their physical superiority: their cast, like all the human race, is fallen off from the vigour which the first men must have possessed; the consideration resulting from arms has gone from them to the Moors, by whom they have been conquered. If any thing can maintain them in their present elevated rank, it is their secret as to their primitive language, their mysteries, the books of their religion, the knowledge derived from them, and more than all, perhaps, the privilege of being immediately charged with the ceremonies of worship, the altars, and the gods.

These altars are contained in small temples, called pagodas. Some of these edifices are very considerable, and cover a great extent of ground; but it is by means of the adjacent buildings, the towers constructed over the gates, and the surrounding objects of the court, that the temples have so grand an appearance. The pagoda itself is a small edifice not capable of containing more than an hundred persons: it is generally situated in the middle of the court: the idol is placed on a little pedestal, ornamented with flowers, exposed to the veneration

of the people. They burn before the image of the god a great quantity of cocoa-oil in a multitude of small lamps; they present it with offerings of fruits, milk, grain, oil, and flowers; at each offering a number of little bells, fastened to a machine of wood in the form of a triangle, are rung; this noise is agreeable both to the god and to the multitude; and whoever by his present has merited the favour of the bells, pays for it a sum of money for the benefit of the Bramins.

On this subject no one has written with more accuracy than Sonnerat; I have traversed the country with his book in my hand, and have verified his accounts. I shall therefore avoid entering deeply into this subject after him, but shall refer those who wish for details on what relates to religion, the images that are adored, and the different emblems by which the different incarnations of Brama and the other divinities are represented, to the work itself.

Wisdom is worshipped under the image of a cow: we find this image in all the pagodas, placed on a large pedestal in the middle of the court; we meet with it also on the highways, where several roads meet, in a small nook cut in one of the extremities. The Indians pay particular devotion to this goddess, whose excrement they hold in great veneration: it has the property of keeping off insects; and those, therefore, who observe the rites by which the animal is adored, wash the interior of their houses with an infusion of cow-dung. They also plaster the walls on the outside with it, so that the Malabar houses in general are agreeable neither to the sight nor the smell.

Of their religious principles I shall mention one only, which is interesting to travellers.

Hospitality is a virtue which their religion particularly recommends; and, on that account, a per-

son on a journey is considered by them as a sacred object. There are indeed instances of individuals having been murdered for the sake of plunder : but that is not the fault of the dogma. In every part of the world men are to be found daring enough to despise all precepts ; and though a few robbers here have violated this law of hospitality, it is in general strictly observed. A traveller is not only received with kindness, but his wants on the road are anticipated. Chauderies, which are places nearly similar to caravansaries, are built, in which he may enter freely, lodge, dress his provisions, if he has any, and depart without paying any thing. The hospitality would certainly be greater if the poor traveller could find also something to eat ; but a gratuitous asylum, in a country where the chief want is shelter from the inclemency of the climate, is at least a considerable accommodation.

These chauderies are sometimes very large ; they are attended by a man whose business it is to sweep and keep them clean. A traveller arrives, and without ceremony takes possession of the house ; for the moment it in a manner belongs to him. Another comes, the first makes room for him, and the new-comer, without saying a word, fixes himself wherever he pleases. The same rule is observed till the chauderie is full. When the heat has subsided, they proceed on their way, and gain the next halting-place. In the evening each lies down to sleep, the Indians without order or distinction : if an European be present, they have the complaisance to leave him a little corner to himself. Though hospitality be a point of religion among them, yet, to avoid the inconvenience it might occasion, particularly on commercial roads, they erect chauderies in their aldées or villages, and by that means are free from the visits of travellers, who never think

of addressing themselves to the inhabitants when they can find a public-house ; it is even possible, if they were to do so, they would in that case not be received. Independently of these chauderies in the villages or near them, there are others at regular distances on the roads in the country, far from any other habitation. The traveller, parched by an ardent sun, or assailed by a storm in the midst of an immense plain, and deprived of every other resource, thus finds, through the country he has to pass, a gratuitous shelter from the injuries of the weather and climate. If water should not be abundant in the neighbourhood, they are careful to dig large ponds, in which men and animals may bathe and quench their thirst.

The establishment of these chauderies is not only a principle of religion, but is even a mode of atonement for sins. The rich are all anxious to have them built wherever they suppose them to be necessary. A *concessionnaire*, or placeman, who has made an ill use of his authority, and acquired great riches by illicit means, expects, by building such establishments, to obtain forgiveness. To do good to travellers is to render himself agreeable to the Divinity ; and a man like this, loaded with crimes, will die in tranquillity, persuaded that he shall enjoy eternal felicity in the bosom of Brama, if he has erected two or three chauderies. A very considerable number of these buildings is found in the neighbourhood of great towns, divided into apartments or cells, in which every traveller may be lodged separately ; and some even have an adjoining house, better arranged, for the accommodation of persons of distinction ; but in the country they are nothing more in general than paved squares, surrounded by walls on three sides, the front remaining open : when the building is large, the front is

ornamented with two or three columns to support the top.

These small chauderies have a strange peculiarity, respecting the motive of which I could never obtain the least information. The inside of all of them, or at least of nearly all, is lined with bas-reliefs from top to bottom; the walls, roof, column and pavement, are covered with rude pieces of sculpture, representing the most obscene objects, and forming pictures of the most disgusting lewdness. If building such edifices be a precept of their religion, it is difficult to believe that it prescribes so indecent a decoration.

The dogma of Brama is not without dissentients. Some worship Chiven, or the bad principle; but whatever be the sect they follow, they have only one manner of rendering homage to the Divinity.

The worshipper prostrates himself, and makes his offering in silence; the priests receive it; and when he pays generously, they apply to his arms and forehead a powder of either a red, white, black, or yellow colour, and sometimes all four. The manner of applying them varies according to the sect: those of the ritual of Chiven have three upright streaks in the form of a trident, to others they are applied cross-ways, without shape, and at random, while many have only a patch of this mastich, stuck on with cocoa-oil, with which the skin has been previously rubbed. Thus, however white may be his robe, and whatever pains he may take to keep himself clean, it is impossible not to feel disgusted when we see a Malabar newly daubed at his pagoda with this mastich, which looks as if he had first grinded it between his teeth, and had then smeared his face all over with it. To give a finishing stroke to the picture, let us figure to ourselves a mouth stuffed with beet-root, which, every time it opens,

appears as if vomiting blood : such is the sight, truly hideous, I have been describing.

If their private devotion be silent, their solemnities are extremely noisy. Almost every people have introduced singing among their religious ceremonies ; some have adopted dancing. The Christians of the primitive church danced on holidays ; and the bishops themselves conducted the performance. The Jews danced before the ark ; they had danced also before the golden calf. Whether dancing was a peculiarity of their worship, which they brought from Egypt, or whether this petty nation, of so little consequence as to have no customs of her own, borrowed it from her conquerors in the time of her captivity, it is certain, that at very remote periods, dancing was introduced into the religious ceremonies of several people of Asia.

This custom has not been lost in India, but continues to this day. The dancers, which the Portuguese have named *balliaderes*, are kept at the expense of the pagoda for the purpose of dancing at the solemnities : they administer also to the pleasures of the chiefs of the sect, who dispose of them as they please. These women have obtained great reputation by the accounts that have been given of them by travellers ; but they appeared to me far beneath what has been said in their praise. Some of them, it must be acknowledged, are tolerably handsome : but their dance is by no means so engaging and voluptuous as has been described ; and their manner of ornamenting themselves, which has made so much noise, has nothing captivating in it, except the custom of painting a large black circle round the eyes. However ridiculous this may appear, it has certainly a very good effect on their figure, and gives to their look an incredible vivacity. Their head-dress is an *ourgandi*, commonly of rose-colour,

blue or brown, and frequently embroidered with gold sprigs. Their clothing is rich, but without taste: and though they are sometimes alluringly dressed, they are never graceful. Their heads are covered with gold trinkets; the nose has a large ring, which they are obliged to lay aside when they eat; and their ears are frightfully loaded with an incredible number of rings of every description. This last decoration is not peculiar, but belongs to them in common with all the Indian women. Their ears are pierced when young with a punch, and a spring is placed in the hole, serving gradually to enlarge it. The cartilage at length is so much dilated, that it is by no means uncommon to see a wooden spring, in shape like the spring of a watch, and of the diameter of a crown-piece, in the ears of a female. When they wish to be full dressed, they take out the spring, and put in its place as many trinkets as the aperture will admit. I have seen the ear so prodigiously loaded, that I was astonished the cartilage did not break, and am still at a loss to conceive how it could bear so considerable a weight.

The balliaderes enjoy a sort of consideration and some honours among the multitude. As to the precedence they obtain, it is only in the interior of the pagoda, from their office placing them near the idol, before which they dance.

There have been some among them, who, notwithstanding the difficulty of gaining access to them, have strongly excited the passions of certain Europeans; and hence has arisen their reputation for beauty. For myself, I hesitate not to place them far beneath the female Bramins, who are of a much whiter colour (for some of the balliaderes are completely black), of a better look, more fresh, more plump; in a word, these were in my eyes desirable objects, while the balliaderes never made the least impres-

sion on my senses, even when aided by the illusion of dancing. By the by, as every thing coming from afar is apt to appear wonderful to the imagination, it may not be amiss to inform the reader, that though the word dancing is applied alike to the mountebanks of India, and the nymphs of the opera at Paris, they are nevertheless very far from resembling each other, not only as to grace and talent in general, but even as to the particular species of talent belonging to the profession.

The dance of these women is a cadenced movement, executed to the sound of a drum, which a Black beats with his fingers, and which he accompanies with a song, that, to ears of the least delicacy, would seem barbarous. The mode of beating time is with a small bell or cymbal, which the dancing-master or person that conducts this species of ballet holds in his hand. This bell or cymbal he beats against the edge of another of the same kind, which produces a brisk vibrating sound, that animates the dancers, and gives precision to their movements. They display, however, no elegant attitudes, perform no particular steps, but are full of gesticulation, and the motion of the arms seems to occupy their whole care and attention. Sometimes, during the dance, they play with Moorish poniards; an exercise at which they appeared to be expert. One of them, who was considered as eminently dextrous, was sent for one evening to the house of the Malabar chief, to dance in my presence. Seemingly some one had given her a hint; for she took infinite pleasure in frightening me with her poniards, the points of which she presented to me suddenly, turning quickly round every time she passed near me, but stopping with great precision within a finger's breadth of my breast. This movement was directed and timed by a stroke of the small cymbal

which the dancing-master struck unawares at my ear, and which never failed to make me start, to the great amusement of the crowd, which this exhibition generally draws together.

The principal festivals on which the balliaderes publicly dance are, the hunting-day of the gods, the festival of the chariot, and that of the elephant. For a detail of these festivals consult Sonnerat. I shall merely observe, that the hunt of the gods is not celebrated at present with so much pomp as it was formerly, while the festival of the chariot has lost as yet nothing of its splendour. We may remark, nevertheless, whatever be the spirit of the revolution which seems to over-run the globe and undermine received opinions, that it appears to act upon the fanaticism of the Indians. Formerly all the chariot festivals were distinguished by the death of some individual who thought, that by getting himself crushed to pieces or lamed by the wheels or sharp instruments with which the chariots are armed, he should render himself worthy of heaven; a respectable opinion, because it partakes of religion. But now, though they are still equally convinced of the happiness enjoyed in another world by those who devote themselves to this kind of death, the number of victims is notwithstanding considerably diminished; few are to be found who wish to purchase future felicity at so dear a rate; and, if we except the pagoda of Jagernaut, the most celebrated in India, where at most scarcely one bigot perishes in this manner in a year, they are no longer seen throwing themselves down before the chariot in the procession; or, if any one should do so, he takes care to avoid the fatal wheel, and comes off safe and sound, or, at the worst, with only a slight injury.

We find however in India as great a number of

faquirs as formerly ; these people still devote themselves to misery ; but happiness in the other world is not their motive, and they would probably be much less numerous, if they did not find here a recompence for the punishments they impose on themselves, in the extraordinary consideration they enjoy, and the respect which is lavished on them. He who devotes himself to death, and seeks the consummation of his wishes under the wheels of the sacred chariot, has the full reward of his pain to expect hereafter ; during this life he does not receive the least portion of it. This charm is not so forcible as that of the faquirs. Faith in Brama alone may make martyrs of the chariot ; pride governs the others, and supports them in the pains they endure. To enable them to bear the tortures to which they subject themselves, this pride must be great, and must have an astonishing empire over the human heart.

Of the instances of this kind which struck me, that of keeping the hand constantly closed was the one that inspired me with the deepest sentiment of horror and pity for the unhappy being who was the object of it. The faquir who devoted himself to this species of punishment, had his hand pierced by his nails, which, continuing to grow notwithstanding that posture, had cut through the metacarpus, and came out again between the muscles by which the fingers are moved. Conceive what must be the duration of a pain like this, and the constancy of him who endured it.

The priests, however, are very great jugglers, and possess the art of imposing wonderfully on the people. I saw an instance of it in the neighbourhood of Pondicherry, at the festival of fire. A woman, with an infant at her breast passed barefoot twice over a red-hot pan of the length of twenty feet,

without the smallest indication of pain. She walked slowly ; and what invincibly proves to me the juggling of the priests, is, that her feet, which I had the curiosity to examine, bore not the slightest mark of being burnt. I could obtain no proof that the woman participated in the craft of the priest ; it is possible, that, taking advantage of her confidence, simplicity and credulity, he might have applied, without her knowledge, some greasy substance to her feet, the virtue of which was to prevent the action of the fire : but whether she was privy to it or not, some such means must certainly have been employed. Among the multitude, however, there was not an individual, my dobachi excepted, who was reputed a man of understanding, that was not persuaded that the power of the Divinity alone had preserved her from the effects of the fire. I am ignorant whether the chemists in Europe have the secret of rendering the skin fire-proof ; but I know that it is not confined to the frontiers of India ; for I have found it on the coast of Africa, in the fiery ordeals which the Negroes of Congo are made to undergo, when accused of a crime they are obliged to expiate. The Gangas conduct this ceremony, and destroy or acquit the accused according to their pleasure.

The priests are far from being the only jugglers, and I do not even think them the most expert. Their tricks, prepared by time, and aided by superstition, have a great advantage over those of other men, and are more likely to succeed. But nothing can surpass the dexterity of their rivals, from whom our best slight-of-hand men might receive lessons.

In deceptive tricks, such as vomiting fire, pieces of flaming hemp and flax, a considerable quantity of thorns, and appearing to draw away the whole of their intestines by the mouth, and swallow them :

again, with other facetious performances of a similar kind, they succeed by main force, and carry the art to astonishing perfection. In these feats of strength, there is no delusion, no flight-of-hand, no deception: what we see is precisely what we think we see. One of these performances is of a nature to contradict all the laws of anatomy, and which no surgeon could believe till he had witnessed it. I have known some who were even incredulous after they had seen it, and who refused to trust the evidence of their eyes.

An Indian, naked like his fellows, with no muslin round him, nor any clothing whatever to serve as a cloak and facilitate deception, takes a sword, the edge and point of which are rounded off and blunted, and putting it into his mouth, buries it completely, all but the hilt, in his throat and intestines.

I have observed some of these men from whom the momentary irritation caused by the insertion of this strange body has forced tears; others to whom it gave an inclination to cough, which, as they were not able to satisfy it, obliged them to withdraw the blade instantly, to prevent suffocation. In fine, when the sword has entered as far as it can, to the depth of more than two feet, they fix a small petard to the hilt, set fire to it, and bear its explosion; they then draw out the sword, which is covered with the humidity of the intestines.

I know that a fact of such description will be regarded by readers in general as a fable, to which they conceive they should give no credit. At this I shall not be surprised: till I had seen it I refused myself to believe it; but I was under the necessity at last of yielding to the force of evidence; and the exhibition of it is now so common at Pondicherry, that among the travellers who have visited that town, there is not one, perhaps, who has not witnessed it.

Independently of these people, there are also rope-dancers, who perform dangerous leaps, which those in Europe could not imitate. But of all their jugglers the most amusing are those who are thought to have the virtue of enchanting serpents, and they have at least the art.

India abounds in reptiles of every description, and particularly in serpents.

Travellers who are not sufficient naturalists to class them, distinguish three principal sorts: First, the minute-serpent, which is a small black sort, with yellow rings, found frequently in pastures. The corrosive matter contained in the vesicles of this animal is so sharp and violent, that it causes almost instant death. The general opinion of old women and the multitude is, that a person may live just as many minutes after being bit as the reptile has rings round its body: and hence the name that is given it, of minute-serpent. It is certain, that the ravages caused by its poison are so sudden that the best alkali applied to the wound, at the very moment of the bite, can scarcely counteract it so effectually as to preserve life, and never prevents the part from being affected with marasmus, languor and palsy.

The bezoar-stone is not of sufficient efficacy against the venom of this serpent, and is not even capable of protracting life. It is true, that the greater part of those which are purchased in this country are not genuine, or at least are very bad. The Indians have the talent of fabricating them, so as to resemble perfectly the good ones, and the greatest skill is necessary not to be mistaken. The bezoar-dealers generally bring them to Pondicherry and Madras, and have at the same time large scorpions, by which to try the efficacy of the stone. The best are without contradiction those which are found in

the bladder of the antelope ; the dealers say they are all derived from that animal. These men suffer themselves to be stung in the finger by an enormous black scorpion, which they irritate by striking it on the back. The wounded part is then made to bleed by pressing it, and they immediately apply the bezoar, making all kinds of contortions as they do it, to persuade the spectators that they feel a great deal of pain. After a few minutes they pull away the stone, notwithstanding its close adhesion to the wound, which is now stopped from bleeding, has no swelling or appearance of irritation, and is perfectly cured. If the bezoar thus made use of be seized immediately by the intended purchaser, there is no doubt of his obtaining a good one ; but it often happens, that, under pretence of washing it, it is dextrously conveyed away, and a factitious calculus without virtue substituted in its stead.

The second description of serpent is that called by the Portuguese *capelle*, from *capella*, a cloak. It is distinguished by a membrane on each side of the head, which are in general not perceived ; but whenever the animal is irritated, they rise up and form a kind of head-dress, that gives it a very beautiful appearance. This serpent is very dangerous and extremely irascible ; but alkali radically cures its bite.

The third species is the house-serpent, which is not in the smallest degree either dangerous or irascible. It glides into the cradle of infants, without occasioning the least accident. Yet we naturally feel an emotion of horror, when we find them in our dwellings ; particularly, as we are not sure at first sight of what kind they may be. As soon, therefore, as one of these reptiles is discovered, care is taken to destroy it ; and if it is not to be caught, the enchanter is sent for.

This man arrives loaded with baskets, in which are snakes and serpents of every kind. His legs are furnished with a description of rings, which dangle at liberty on the ankle. These rings are cut in two breadthwise, and the two parts hollowed, so that at each motion of the charlatan's foot, the two sides strike against each other and produce a very shrill noise, resembling the sound of a brass basson when struck with a hammer. Another instrument is also employed, called a drone bagpipe, of which the bag is pressed under the arm. The noise of this instrument is so great, that the serpent, stunned and overcome by it, is easily taken.

The conjuror begins by making the serpents in the baskets dance; but he does not expose them till he has played some time to stupefy them a little: yet in spite of this precaution, as soon as the baskets are opened, the capelles in particular seem inclined to be angry rather than to dance, and, by provoking them, they rise up, and assume a threatening posture.

The man keeps near them, and strikes occasionally with his foot to stupefy them quickly. When the right effect is produced, a giddiness takes place, the eye loses its lustre, and the serpent, by attempting to balance itself, exhibits the appearance of dancing.

The reptile that is to be caught, attracted by the noise, is sure to leave its retreat, and the sight of its fellow-creatures appears to decide the affair; for it readily joins them, follows their example, and soon partakes of their supineness.

The conjuror then puts a basket over its head, and shutting it up in it carries it off with the rest, amongst which it figures in its turn, and equals them in docility. The enchanter asks no other reward for his trouble than the animal he has thus caught.

In every country, those who live on the credulity of others seldom fail to give to their actions an appearance of the marvellous, thereby the more surely to impose on the multitude. It is with this view that the enchanters of serpents persuade the spectators, that a few grains of rice will destroy the enchantment which they pretend to operate on the reptile, will expose their persons to the greatest danger, and render their instrument mute. Europeans seldom fail to throw a small quantity at them, and they are generally alert in seizing the moment when this is done. The instant they perceive the rice, they pretend to be no longer able to draw tones from their bagpipes, and they fall into fits. The serpents, hearing no noise, recover from their delirium, and endeavour to escape. Fear instantly disperses the crowd, the most intrepid amongst which endeavour to bring the conjuror to himself; who, when he sees his reptiles beginning to crawl off, is one of the first to recover his senses. When rice is thrown without their knowledge, this farce does not take place; an evident proof that it is all deception and trick.

The Indians use no pomatum for the hair, but, believing as we do, that a fat substance contributes to its preservation, they substitute cocoa-oil instead of it. The Malabars use but little of this oil, but the Portuguese cast employ it in profusion. When the oil is fresh, there is nothing disagreeable in the smell; but as no powder is worn, it soon becomes rancid, and acquires a stench, to which the people of the country are accustomed, but that is extremely disagreeable to a stranger. Ladies of the most elegant appearance have often occasioned me a nausea, in spite of their pretensions to beauty, and the high opinion they entertained of their charms. Good breeding requires that this disgust should be

concealed, but I have often abridged my visits to escape the cruel odour that pursued me in every company. Another custom, no less disagreeable to strangers, and which habit has made absolutely necessary to Indians of all casts and both sexes, is that of chewing betel.

Betel is a small shrub bearing a leaf similar in size and shape to that of the mulberry, and nearly of the same contéxture as an ivy-leaf. Like the latter, it is smooth and of a deep green on one side. Its smell is strong, aromatic, and pungent, and its taste so sharp and violent that it cannot be borne by itself. To render it milder, arec-nut and a little lime are taken with it, which are rolled up in the leaf before they begin to chew it. The betel excites such a prodigious quantity of saliva, that the inhabitants of the country are obliged to keep dishes constantly near them to spit in; in some houses they are even placed on the table. The lime strips the teeth, destroying both them and the gums, while the arec dies the mouth of a colour resembling blood, and which is frightful to behold. Accordingly, nothing can be more disgusting than the mouth of these Indians. The black teeth, bare to the very roots, corroded and covered by a red tartar, give them an appearance the more shocking, as they seem every moment to spit blood. Arec stains also of that colour every thing about them, and their handkerchiefs in particular are dreadfully disagreeable to strangers. It requires a long residence in the country to become habituated to this practice.

Mechanism and the arts are still in their infancy throughout India. The natives have no machines, no instruments out of the common way, nor the least knowledge of hydraulics: they have scarcely even the necessary utensils for the works they un-

undertake. Neither their carpenters nor joiners have benches, but work sitting on the ground, employing their great toe to keep firm whatever they are working at, which they persevere with great patience in fashioning. They make little use of the axe, as it obliges them to work standing; but they do not fear attacking any thing, however large, with the chisel, which they can use sitting. The whole of a joiner's tools in this country consists of a miserable line, a chisel, a mallet, and a saw. With these instruments alone, assisted by patience, they accomplish any work of which a pattern is given them.

The goldsmiths are no better furnished. You send for a workman either in gold or silver whenever you have occasion for one, and he places himself in a corner of the court with his implements, consisting of a hammer, an anvil, an indifferent file, a portable forge, and a crucible. With these he works a whole day to make a ring, and will succeed in fabricating other articles that require no great invention. There are some, however, that they will not undertake. Our best European productions are above their ability; but they make notwithstanding, in their way, a very considerable variety.

Smiths are equally behind hand, and yet find no inconvenience in forging every thing. They place themselves they care not where, make a small hole in the ground, and kindle a fire in it. To the fire they apply a pair of bellows made of two sheepskins well sewed together, terminating in a tube at one end to conduct the air, but open at the other, and nailed to two pieces of wood serving as handles. The smith, seated before his fire, works these bellows with his hands, while his feet are employed in holding or turning his iron in the fire: when it is hot, he ceases blowing, and his anvil being near, he

forges whatever he wishes without rising. If the piece he would heat be too large for one pair of bellows, he employs two, and could even use three without any other inconvenience than having two children to assist in working them. Thus, a hammer, an anvil, and two sheep-skins, are every thing he stands in need of. With these he will fabricate every article of iron-work necessary in building a house.

Their sculptors have no better implements than their joiners, and there cannot be a greater curiosity than to see with what address they fashion the blocks under foot.

Except for linen cloths, they have no painters. They stretch the cloth in their court-yard, and sit down to work on it ; for here, as in every other trade, they are ignorant how to do any thing standing. Their tools consist of a brush or two of bamboo-wood, of which the ends are beaten soft, and converted into threads of no great fineness. With these wretched instruments dipped in colour, which they keep in a kind of wooden box, they design and paint the beautiful Indian goods, which we find it difficult to imitate in Europe. They hold the brush between the first and second fingers, in the same manner as they hold the pen when they write ; but they have no great need of patience in this talent, as they design with admirable celerity.

Of all their tools or machines, that used in weaving approaches the nearest to ours. In Pondicherry, there are some formed exactly on the same model ; but in the villages they are much more simple. In other respects, with the exception of the workman's convenience, and the excellence of the different parts, their looms are very much like ours, and produce the same effects. Nothing can be more portable than they are : when a family moves

to fresh quarters, or sets out on a journey, a child will bear the whole machine in its arms, when taken to pieces, and thus carry the fortune of the whole house.

The instrument used by carders of cotton is the only one which seemed to me to be ingenious. Cotton is the source of their wealth; and it is therefore not surprising, that they should have bestowed on a machine that prepares it for spinning some additional pains. It is large, with a head nearly resembling the handle of a violin. On this instrument a large gut is stretched, which they pinch with the cotton, and the vibration, tossing it in the air, separates and cleans it perfectly.

Their spinning-wheels are exactly like the large wheel which our peasants use in spinning wool. The fineness of the thread depends on the skill of the workman.

Their architecture, relatively speaking, is not at all superior to their other arts. Its proportions are considerably abbreviated: without having examined this subject minutely, it appears to me that they have two orders; one short and heavy, with mouldings similar to the Tuscan; the other longer, light, and slender, terminating in a head like a cabbage, different from that of the Corinthian order, yet serving as a substitute for it, without partaking of its elegance.

The manner in which they build large edifices is rather extraordinary. Their houses are of brick, and in erecting these they proceed in the ordinary way: but when they have pagodas or chauderies to construct, and great weights to lift to a considerable height, they act upon a very different plan. As they have neither palankas, masts, cranes, nor any other other instrument for the accumulation of force, they introduce a very ingenious substitute.

The foundations are laid as usual, and the first row of stones being raised above the surface, they throw up earth against it, and slope it down on the outside. In laying the second row, they roll the stones on by means of this slope, and thus get them to their place without the least inconvenience; then bringing more earth, they increase the slope, and lay every row of stones in the same manner till the whole is complete; so that when the building is finished it is perfectly buried, and is no bad resemblance of a small mountain sloped regularly on all sides. The earth is afterwards carried away, and the building remains entire.

The interior of the houses of the opulent is plastered with a kind of mastic, which they call stucco. This composition exactly resembles marble; and when it is well made, it becomes so hard, and acquires so beautiful a polish, that, if not exposed to the injuries of the air, it will last upwards of twenty years. It is composed of sifted lime, when no plaster can be got, mixed with sugar, oil, and the white of eggs.

Shoe-makers are the best furnished with tools, but they do not sew their leather as we do, but have a small instrument like that used by embroiderers in Europe; the thread is therefore passed double through the sole, and another thread run through the loops, which are drawn tight upon it. This method of sewing takes very little time, and indeed great expedition is used through the whole business. A workman takes measure for a pair of shoes in the morning, kills a goat, takes off its skin, tans it for the leather of which they are to be made, and after dinner brings them home to all appearance handsome and good. This quick mode of tanning must of course be very defective, the process being excessively astringent; but the hide, without except-

ing even the colour, is not unlike our green leather. They take measure by spanning the foot, and by merely touching it will make a shoe fit well; but the materials of which the shoe is made are wretched. The principal inconvenience arises from the skins being so recently dressed. When the shoe is first tried on, the leather is humid and flexible, but it soon becomes as hard as parchment. I am speaking of shoes for sale. The second inconvenience arises from its being sewed with cotton; for if, by accident, you put your foot into water, the thread gives way, and the shoe comes to pieces; and even if you have the good fortune to keep clear of water, and the cotton be good enough to last a day or two, the first false step will burst the upper-leather. With such shoes it is impossible to dance long, and accordingly if you attend a ball, and have no European shoes, it is necessary to have two or three pair that are sewed with silk. To remedy this inconvenience, the inhabitants of Pondicherry have thread from Europe, which is used instead of cotton, and the shoes, if carefully made, will last a much longer time.

The principal object of cultivation in India is rice. Very little wheat is grown, and that little is intended for the use of Europeans. The Indians, comprehending even the Portuguese cast, live almost entirely upon rice, so that having scarcely any corn to grind, they are in no want of mills. It would be easy to erect wind-mills, but they are fortunate in being able to do without them, as calms and hurricanes would render them useless during a great part of the year; and as to water-mills, the country is so level, that no streams are to be found of sufficient force to put the wheels in motion. They reduce their grain to flour, notwithstanding, by the use of hand-mills. The population

is so considerable, the means of industry so scarce, and manual labour of course so cheap, that no inconvenience is felt from the want of machinery. It is true, they can never apply any considerable force; but I have seen them adopt in lieu of it, in their shipping, some very ingenious means, and as little complicated as that which I before mentioned in building their houses.

They use a kind of mill to extract oil from cocoa, which, though very imperfect, yields them the same advantages as a better. Several Europeans would have furnished them with models. Mr. Beggle even constructed a large mill at Madras, that was worked by oxen. It consisted of several wheels, gained prodigiously in point of expedition over the mills of the country, and answered in every respect much better. The Blacks examined and admired it, but persisted in the use of their own, for reasons which appeared to me judicious. To erect such a mill a great number of materials were necessary, and a considerable expense would be incurred. An Indian could not afford this, and the machine required besides too many oxen and hands to work it. The rich, in whose power it was to speculate in this way, considered it as beneath them, and were unwilling to turn their views further than the cloth-trade and stock-jobbing. A person of the lower class, who devotes himself to this sort of work, has but two oxen, and frequently only one. His mill consists of a large vase, in which a pivot, fixed to a beam and worked by his oxen, presses the cocoa, and extracts the oil. This machine is erected in the open air, and requires neither house nor servants. Himself alone, between his two beasts, regulates their pace, and works just as much as suffices for his subsistence. The extraction of cocoa-oil is the only process that requires a mill.

The Indians have neither barn nor threshing-floor for their rice. A man, squat on his heels, takes a handful of the straw in his left hand, places it on a block of wood that is before him, and beats it with a kind of mallet which he holds in the other hand. However great the quantity they have to thresh, this is the only method they employ, increasing the number of hands in proportion to the work. When the grain is cleared from its outward covering, and they wish to cook it, they throw a portion into a large mortar, made of the trunk of a tree, hollowed in the shape of a reversed cone, and which will hold about twenty pounds. In this vessel they stir and pound it with a large stick for several hours. As this must be done standing, it fatigues them greatly. The rice by the friction is so well cleared as to be ready to winnow and wash for use.

Their land is cultivated by the plough. That which has a spring of water near it is appropriated to the growth of rice, that it may be laid under water at pleasure. The fields are divided into small compartments, similar to a salt-pit in Europe. The banks are raised about a foot above the surface to retain the water upon the land. It is well known that humidity, combined with heat, produces vegetation, and it appears that rice, to make it thrive well, requires a great deal of water. I am aware that there is a kind of mountain-rice: but it is probable, that to the acceleration of the growth of this kind of rice, water is not essentially necessary; and it is thought besides to be unwholesome, and to occasion dysenteries. The low-land rice, to grow fast, ought to be constantly covered with six inches of water. The land is never drained till the grain is nearly ripe. In watering it, the genius of the Indians is particularly manifested. Having no hydraulic machines, or the means of applying great mechanical force,

they employ an instrument which they call a *picole*, or at least which Europeans have so named for them.

The soil in the plains of the peninsula of India is not yet entirely drained, its surface alone being free from the element which formerly overwhelmed it. This soil does not rest on a solid foundation, and if dug to any depth, the water, which has not been able to run off in the few ages that have elapsed since its retreat from the surface, is instantly found. From its filtering through the earth, assisted by the supply it receives from the rain and torrents that pour from the mountains in the rainy seasons, the saline and bituminous qualities it contained are in a great measure lost, and it is become in many places drinkable, while in others it is brackish. The cultivators, therefore, have only to dig in a corner of a field, to have a well fit for watering it. Near this well they set up a pole about fifteen or eighteen feet high, which serves as a resting-point to a strong lever, a fourth part longer than the pole, placed on an axis shorter than the pole by about three-fourths. The large end, by which it is moved up and down, is loaded with a sufficient weight to answer that purpose. To the small end they hang a pole equal in length to the depth of the well, and they fasten to it a kettle, that will hold about a half a barrel of water, more or less. A Black at the brink of the well sinks this kind of bucket, and when it is filled another Black mounts upon the lever, walks towards the heavy end, and his weight, added to that already affixed to it, raises the water to the edge of the well, where the Black, stationed for the purpose, empties it into the canal destined to receive it, and it is thus conveyed into the different compartments of the field.

This work they perform with great agility every morning and evening to the tune of a song calculated to charm its irksomeness and fatigue. A pi-

cote, when the Blacks exert themselves well, will draw up five barrels in a minute; there are few machines that would draw as much, at so little expence and with no more hands.

The Indians are in general sober and lazy; little suffices for their wants, and that little obtained no motive will induce them to work for more. When a person of the lower class therefore has earned a couple of rupees, he can purchase a sack of rice and while this lasts he would remain in idleness; but the tax-gatherers take good care to leave him scarcely any means of indulging his natural propensity.

Their exactions surpass any thing that can be said of them. The wretched inhabitants can with difficulty scrape together three or four rupees without its coming to the knowledge of these men, by whom they are instantly extorted.

The Indians cultivate also cotton and indigo: the former is the small cotton of the Antilles, which they cultivate and gather as in other places; but their manner of macerating and precipitating indigo is different from that of any other country. We see none of those large establishments which are to be met with in our islands; nor have they any tubs to beat and macerate a great number of herbs at a time. A workman who is in want of a small quantity of indigo, macerates and beats it in a pot. This process is so slow as to require all his patience, and would not answer for a manufactory of any extent. They frequently leave it to precipitate of itself; and as, if the water be not sufficiently stirred to detach the particles of indigo, it becomes difficult to precipitate, they accelerate it with lime. This practice is common in Cayenne, whence it has passed to the Isle of France.

To the cultures before mentioned the Indians add that of cocoa-trees. I have observed in another

part of this work, that this tree is the most valuable present which man has received from the hands of nature. I shall not enter here into an explanation of the numerous advantages derived from it, or to what uses the fruit, hair, leaves, and wood, are applied : I shall merely observe, that these trees never fail to make the fortune of those who possess any quantity of them in the neighbourhood of the towns of India. A person having a small garden containing three hundred cocoa-plants, which require no great space on account of the small distance at which they are planted from each other, will derive from it a sufficient income for his support without any other resource. Of these plants a hundred will in this case be appropriated to the production of *calou* or palm-wine, while the rest bear fruit, from which they extract oil, and afterwards sell the hair for the use of the shipping. Such an estate at Pondicherry would be worth a thousand rupees a year : an enormous sum for an Indian. Some idea may be formed of the price of living in that town by what is charged at inns and boarding-houses. In the latter, for thirty rupees a month, you live luxuriously : and the terms have been considerably raised to make it amount to that price, for before the war they were much lower. It is easy to conceive, that a private family has many advantages over such houses.

Their *calou*, or palm-wine, is extracted in the same way as on the coast of Africa, the liquor being drawn from an incision made in one of the principal branches ; but their method of climbing the tree is very different. The Black employed in this work puts his feet into a rope-ring about six inches long, which keeps them from separating, and enables him to find sure footing on the rough trunk of the tree, on which he climbs, by clasping

it with his arms and rising about six inches at a stretch.

The common fruits of India are the banana, pi-sang, sweet and bitter orange, citron, shaddock, ananas, mango, particularly a species of extraordinary delicacy growing at Velour, cinnamon apples, otherwise called atte, jam rosa, letchi, mangosteen and sarangosteen; and at Madras the bread-fruit begins to appear. These are all too well known for any of them to require a description.

European vegetables succeed there tolerably well. Of those which are natural to the climate, the principal are brette and ignam. Brette resembles spinach, and is cooked in the same way: it is very bitter, and requires seasoning. The Indians esteem it highly in a dish called cari. Ignam is a farinaceous root of a high flavour, and is eaten like bread.

I shall say nothing of the ornithology of India, Sonnerat having perfectly exhausted the subject; but I shall venture to affirm, as to quadrupeds, that the elephant is not yet thoroughly known in Europe. With all the respect I entertain for Buffon, I cannot ascribe it to modesty that this animal does not multiply in captivity. It is in this state by no means disinclined to love, but seeks the female, though not in season, and greatly caresses her. It is seldom indeed that this animal propagates in confinement, but there are certainly instances of it. I saw myself a young one at Bengal born so lately that it was necessary to put boiled rice into its mouth, as, unless fed in this manner, it was incapable of eating. Though what I have advanced upon this subject may be at variance with the observations that have been made in Europe, where the male and female elephant have been kept together, I ought not to be hastily condemned; for the manners of an animal, shut up with its mate in a

cage, are certainly different from those which it would assume in its own country, where it enjoys, in the extensive parks in which it is kept among a number of its fellows, such liberty, that it seems scarcely to have any sense of its confinement.

The elephant is not so heavy in its motions as many have supposed, and is capable of acquiring by exercise considerable agility: I have seen it skip and leap with ease and lightness. All that has been said of its sagacity appears to me to be perfectly true: I shall not enumerate the instances, already well known, that have been cited in proof of it.

The use of this animal is become very common in India. Though it bears a high price, and its maintenance is expensive, there are few persons of any wealth who have not several. They are employed in carrying burdens, for taking the air, for hunting and for war. Those employed in war are extremely courageous, and often display more bravery than many men. Those trained to the chase are used only against tigers.—I shall resume this subject when I come to the article of Bengal.

Among the disorders which greatly prevail here, of a depurative nature, and which, with proper treatment, would produce salutary effects, is the itch; but it is attended with one disagreeable circumstance, that of making itself apparent. The inhabitants have a common saying, “that love and the itch cannot be concealed;” and they prefer to this complaint the gonorrhœa, which besides, by serving them as a sort of issue perpetually open, is of material benefit to their health. For this latter complaint the root called *curanelli* proves efficacious in the most obstinate cases.

Pondicherry, at the time of my being there, contained only from four hundred and fifty to five hundred Europeans at most. As it was not likely that

so inconsiderable a population could produce much diversity, or at least much contrariety, of interests, it might have been hoped, that this colony would escape the effects of the commotions which were overthrowing the governments of Europe. It was visited, however, by the revolutionary mania, which displayed all the symptoms of extravagance that characterized the Jacobins of France, and it is only to be ascribed to the firmness of the chevalier De-Fresne, the governor, that the explosion did not prove fatal to half the inhabitants. The detachment of which the garrison was composed was still retained in the strictest discipline; and the indefatigable zeal of this officer would probably have averted all the troubles by which the colony has been since agitated, had there not been sent from France, for the purpose of strengthening the place, a battalion of infantry, which was soon followed by commissaries. Notwithstanding the pacific endeavours of one of these, the commissary of the marine, he was unable to prevent the establishment of revolutionary forms in the garrison, which at last obliged the governor to retire; and his departure consigned the place to the fate which afterwards befel it.

By the celebrated peace which lord Cornwallis had some time before concluded with Tippoo, the English company obtained half of that prince's territory. Tranquil in the midst of its possessions, it now saw its rivals enfeebling themselves, and enjoyed, without the prospect of danger, the fruit of its conquests.

Its real situation was nevertheless on the mouth of a volcano, the explosion of which depended upon the conduct of its enemies. The treaty that was ultimately to overthrow its powers was even projected and arranged; but subsequent events did not permit it to be carried into execution, and fate.

seemed resolved to perpetuate the triumph of the English.

The intelligence of the French revolution had reached the court of Tippoo, who judged, that the establishment of a new order of things in France might produce a change of sentiment in his favour, and reanimate the allies who had abandoned him. Upon this presumption he founded those resolutions, which have since, in their consequences, involved his total ruin.

In one of his military movements, prior to the period when lord Cornwallis marched with an army from Bengal for the purpose of giving him battle, Tippoo advanced towards Pondicherry, and encamped upon the neighbouring hill. The rules of policy not permitting the French governor to violate his neutrality by admitting him into the town, Tippoo requested, that Mr. L—, the intendant of the place, might be sent to him. This officer, who was commissary of marine, had by a long application to the Moorish language, acquired so intimate a knowledge of it, that he could understand the sultan without an interpreter. At this interview Tippoo explained his intentions to him with confidence; and it was in consequence of the plan which was at this time formed, that Mr. L— embarked for France two months afterwards, in the *Thetis* frigate, to solicit from the government a closer alliance with Tippoo, and such aid as might enable him to make an effectual resistance to the arms of the English company.

Elated with the importance of his mission, and ambitious of returning to the sultan in the character of plenipotentiary, the commissary could see no obstacle to the execution of the project, and persuaded himself of the certainty of its success.

He had little difficulty in inspiring an unfortu-

nate and unassisted prince with all the hope which he himself entertained. It was from this fatal confidence that Tippoo consented to the sacrifices which he made by the peace with lord Cornwallis, being sure, as he thought, when his expected treaty with France should be ratified, of recovering what he ceded. That country however, which was at this time too much occupied with its more immediate and pressing concerns, to afford any share of its consideration to those of India, deferred for the present the alliance; and it was not till the success of its arms against its external enemies allowed it to turn its attention to the interests of the sultan, that the directory, having fallen upon the sketch of the treaty projected in the camp before Pondicherry, gave him those assurances which led this ill-fated nabob to point at last the cannon that was to shatter his throne to atoms.

Had the state of Europe, instead of preventing the close alliance which Tippoo solicited, allowed France to send a body of troops to Pondicherry, the fall of that prince would probably not have taken place; and the French would still have possessed an ally, and have kept a footing in India, by which, in times of greater tranquillity, to re-establish their commerce. The death therefore of Tippoo, and the expulsion of his family from the throne which his father had acquired, are to be added to the long list of calamities, which it has fallen to the lot of France to experience.

The abolition of the monarchy in France having involved the new government in a war with England, all the French settlements in India fell into the hands of the latter nation. Pondicherry was the only place that made any resistance: but colonel Braithwaite obliged it to surrender, though not till the trenches had been open before it thirteen days.

The garrison consisted chiefly of a battalion of European troops, called the battalion of India, which was composed of about two hundred men, the remnant of the troops which had been left at the evacuation of the place; two hundred who had arrived since in the vessel the *Bienvenue*, and who might probably be reduced to a hundred and fifty; and four hundred recruits from L'Orient, in the ship, the Chancellor of Brabant, which discharged upon the shore of India, with these new soldiers, every principle of disorder and insubordination. The rest of the garrison consisted of a battalion of Sepoys, of about the same number; such of the inhabitants who could bear arms, amounting at most to two hundred, and equipped as cavalry; and a detachment of artillery, of about sixty men, including the Caffres who were attached to it. Thus the whole force of the besieged did not exceed sixteen hundred and sixty men, of whom half were native troops; yet with no other fortification than a ditch and banks of crumbling earth, the garrison held out for thirteen days, and repulsed two assaults of an army provided with every requisite to ensure success.

Though Pondicherry was the only place that defended itself (and it was the only one that had the means), Yanaon would at least show a desire of doing the same. M. Sonnerat, the estimable author of the work on the religions of India, commanded in this place for the king. The troubles of the revolution had not spared even this obscure spot of ground; and six commercial houses, which composed the whole European population of the village, were seen with astonishment neglecting their private affairs, to attend to disputes, and the business of deposing the commandant. M. Sonnerat however recovered his authority, and the governor of Pondicherry having thought proper to send him

a reinforcement of six soldiers of colour, he purchased two marine guns, by the help of which he resolved to oppose any hostile attack. Desirous of entwining a branch of the laurel with the wreath which he had already merited by his excellent scientific observations as a naturalist, he made preparations for defending himself with this small force. Though the idea of such an attempt was ludicrous, it deceived the English commander in that part of India, Yeates, who granted him a capitulation. Accordingly M. Sonnerat did not surrender this insignificant village without obtaining the honours of war, and the merchants settled there were indebted to him for conditions, which ensured to them their property and their trade.

Thus fell this fair structure, which, reared upon the foundations laid by Dupleix and Labourdonnaye, appeared at first to afford the prospect of aspiring to the clouds. Alas, it had scarcely risen from the earth, when this catastrophe laid it low, perhaps for ever!

Not satisfied with the total expulsion of the French from the continent of India, the English company thought its task unfinished till it should also make itself master of the Isles of France and Bourbon, the only possessions of its rivals to the east of the Cape of Good Hope, but which might be a source of perpetual annoyance and alarm.

For this enterprise a force of ten thousand men was allotted, who were on the point of embarking, when war was suddenly declared between the nizam of Golconda and the states of the Mahrattas. Tippoo, seeing his frontiers thus exposed to the effects of these hostilities, took up arms as a measure of caution; and the English government not thinking it prudent to employ so great a force in a foreign expedition, when its neighbours at home were

in this posture, the troops received counter orders, and the undertaking was for the present abandoned.

A fault committed by the government of Madras at this time, has since put these islands in security against any future attempt. Towards the close of his reign, Louis XVI. had turned his thoughts to the affairs of India ; and the daily changes in the ministry having at last brought into office some individual who fixed his attention on the means of preserving Pondicherry, and re-establishing it as a military post, the king ordered lieutenant-colonel de Feline, an officer of talents, to be sent out, for the purpose of preparing a system of defence, and of acquiring a knowledge of the country in which he would have himself to carry on a war. This officer, however, being provided neither with men nor money, could effect nothing, and was taken with the place which he was sent to defend. Being a prisoner, he requested his liberty, on condition of not serving again during the war, and it was granted him. This was a flagrant error on the part of the English ; and they added to it, that of suffering him to proceed to the Isle of France. There his reputation had preceded him, and on his arrival, an English officer of equal rank, who happened to be a prisoner, was immediately released. This exchange freeing him from his parole, he was charged to put the colony into a state of defence ; and he succeeded so well in this object, that the English company have not thought proper to risk against it any attempt.

Thus was preserved to the French an important settlement, that may serve, at some future period, as a point on which to assemble their forces, with the view of recovering their former possessions in India ; an undertaking, however, of great difficul-

ty, if at all possible, in the present state of their affairs, with no allies, nor a single port to support them on their landing. The English company is a huge colossus, rendered by its size and weight not easy to be shaken; but this vast structure is raised upon ruins, and whoever builds upon such foundations should count that his fabric will eventually fall. Still, in the relative situation of the two nations, it may be expected, at least for some time, to triumph over all the efforts of France. Formidable by its forces, with no enemies and no rivals, possessing the sovereignty of all India, enriched by an immense commerce, but inclosing in its very bosom a radical defect, in a foreign population; this company will continue to advance, till, enfeebled by its splendour, and too unwieldy for its basis, it will be no longer able to support its prosperity, and will sink under its own weight. It will be the wisdom of France to content herself with sowing the seeds of division and independence among the tributary states of India, without attempting to use open force in the destruction of this empire. This is perhaps the only method by which she can succeed in rescuing this part of the world from the dominion of her rival. She will reap indeed no immediate benefit from the change; but it is a maxim in politics, that every loss we occasion our enemy is so much gain to ourselves.

I have interrupted the narrative of my voyage, that I might place before the reader at once a regular view of the causes which produced the fall of the French power in India. I return to my original subject.

I had promised an account of the French possessions on the coasts of the peninsula. I have mentioned Mahé, Karikal, and Pondicherry; the remainder are the factories of Mazulipatam, and Yanaon.

The former of these is a considerable town, in which the English company have a council under the presidency of Madras, the authority of which extends northward to the frontiers of the Four Sircars. The French government had retained, for the purposes of commerce, a house, on which it was allowed the empty privilege of displaying its flag; but even this right was soon disputed, and finally abolished. Mazulipatam contains some manufactories of handkerchiefs which were formerly of importance, till those of Palliacata were removed to Madras, and established within the walls of that metropolis. They are, however, still in request for the excellence of their colouring. The neighbouring villages also, particularly Narpily, produce some which are held in estimation. The French participated in this branch of trade, by means of the commercial residence mentioned above; and the presence of an agent prevented a part of those obstacles and vexations to be expected by foreigners residing among rivals who are jealous of them.

Further northward, Yanaon, a small settlement within the limits of the English territory, was the centre, as I before observed, of the French commerce on the coast of India. This was the last remnant of the acquisitions of the marquis de Bussy: this illustrious adventurer having in his youth undertaken on his own account the conquest of the empire of the Four Sircars, provinces of the kingdom of Golconda, did homage for it to the crown of France. This country, undergoing the fate of the rest of the French settlements, passed into the hands of the English, who from the ramparts of Visigapatam had command of it, and reduced to inactivity the Dutch colony of Biblipatam, which lies contiguous to it. Yanaon and its territory, situated near the southern extremity of these prov-

inces, was all that France could save at the peace ; and even here the conquerors, before they left it, destroyed every thing that might hereafter offend their pride ; and, in their usual spirit of vandalism, pulled down the house which had formerly belonged to the French company, because it excelled in magnificence that of the governor of Ingeram, the adjacent English settlement.

With respect to the marquis of Bussy, he returned to Europe, where he lived forgotten amidst the honours which had been bestowed upon him, till the war of 1778, occasioning the want of a general to command in India, all eyes were suddenly turned upon him. The remembrance of the conquests of his earlier years was revived, his name alone was deemed to be a tower of strength, and he was eagerly sent to the scene of his former glory, again to display himself. But he was now unfortunately of an age ill suited to a renewal of such exploits. Arriving in India in the character of generalissimo of the French forces, his conduct had no other effect than to paralyse the exertions of troops, that, under a more active commander, would scarcely have waited patiently for the enemy within their entrenchments at Goudelours ; and he terminated his career by a peaceable death at Pondicherry, leaving the brilliant achievements of his youth contrasted by the inertness of his old age. His countrymen erected a monument to his memory in the church of the Capuchins in that town, which still attracts the veneration of those Indians who witnessed his early success.

Yanaon is advantageously situated at the confluence of the small river Coringui with the Godwarin. The mouth of the latter is obstructed by sandbanks, over which the sea never flows above six or seven feet even at the highest tides, and therefore

cannot be entered by vessels drawing a greater depth of water; but by the assistance of an experienced pilot, a tolerably deep passage may be found among the numerous small channels by which the sandbanks are intersected. This river is deep within the bar, and is navigable to a great distance, though little frequented by vessels. Its borders are pleasant; and its course renders the prospect very picturesque. The stream is broad and rapid; at Yanaon it is stronger than that of the Garonne at Bourdeaux. I ascended it even beyond Cota; and the further I advanced, the wider and deeper I found it. Its interior navigation is trifling, as the Indians are too lazy to prosecute any thing that requires activity.

The Coringui is merely a rivulet formed by the Godwarin, and may be regarded as a mouth of it. It proceeds out of the Godwarin at Yanaon, and empties itself into the sea at a small place called Coringui, at the distance of about three leagues. It is augmented in its course by the waters of the district through which it passes. This country, which is scarcely above the level of the sea, is intersected by so many deep canals as to be wholly impassable. In descending the Coringui, the land to the left is a vast marsh, which, draining itself into the river, renders it of sufficient depth near its mouth to admit vessels of considerable burden. The English, who are masters of both banks, have quitted the left, to settle upon the right; and a great part of the natives having followed them, the old town consists now of three or four huts only, round a pagoda that still preserves its ancient reputation. Different treaties have insured to the inhabitants of Yanaon the free navigation of this river, affording a communication with the road at its mouth. This is a great advantage in the conveyance of merchan-

dize, which must otherwise have been sent by the Godwarin, with much danger and loss of time.

The village of Yanaon, with the territory belonging to it, and a small island situated to the south, forms a space of about a league and a half square. This space contains a population of six thousand Indians, and is the last of the French possessions on this coast. We have now taken a survey of them all: the list is not long; and it may readily be seen how greatly the power and influence of that nation are reduced in this part of the globe. This is the result of a bad system, and of obstinacy in the pursuit of ill-conceived plans. The grand projects of Dupleix would have led to glory and to fortune; but these were neglected and despised, while the sovereign was led into error by the ignorance and infatuation of those of his court who were intrusted with the management of the affairs of India. So little were the interests of France in Asia an object of attention at Versailles, that in the framing the treaty of peace of 1783, no person was consulted who was acquainted with our possessions in that quarter. This is evident from the treaty itself, which contains precisely the same condition with regard to India, and nearly in the same words, as that of the preceding peace; though the superiority which M. de Suffrein had acquired gave us the power of recovering all our former losses. A glaring proof of the ignorance of the authors of this treaty, on the part of France, respecting even the geography of the country, on the destiny of which they were to decide, is, that they confounded the village of Vilnour with that of Valadour. The one has a very considerable, the other a very narrow, territory, and, while intending to retain the greater, they stipulated for the less. This mistake, which has deprived us of an extent of land equal

to all that we now retain on the coast, is one of the least errors committed on that occasion. We might have insisted upon the whole country to the south of the peninsula, as far as Pondicherry, that is to say, all the places which the English possess there, and which would have given us the same influence over the princes of those small states, as is now exercised by them; whereas we scarcely acquired in the whole a district of twelve leagues square. All our measures on this subject have been ill chosen; while England, on the contrary, taking advantage of our errors, adopting the wise and prudent system which we abandoned, and opposing patience and perseverance to the petulance of the conductors of our affairs, who were eager to reap the harvest when the seed was scarcely sown, has carried the splendour of its Indian colonies to a height unexampled in the history of the world.

I have thus given a summary account of the decline of the French power in the peninsula of India, without concealing the causes which led to that event. Unhappily, this is not the last reverse of our fortunes which my pen will have to retrace: I shall have occasion hereafter to take a view of Bengal, where it will be seen, that the interests of France were managed neither with more ability, nor more success.

Having finished my business at Pondicherry, I left that place for Bengal. As I had broken one cable at the Sechelles, and another at Pondicherry, it was necessary to provide myself with a new one, to encounter the tides of the Ganges. I could find, however, at this last place neither cable, nor the materials for making one, nor workmen. Madras was the nearest port at which I could furnish myself, and I accordingly determined to take that place ^{for} my way, for the purpose.

This town is one of the three capitals of the English in India. The authority of the council established there extends over all the possessions of the company on the peninsula, eastward of the Gauts; but it is subordinate to that of Calcutta, the residence of the governor-general.

Madras, properly so called, is a very large town, surrounded by a ditch, and a fort of wall, falling in some places into ruins, but sufficient to resist a surprise, or a sudden attack of cavalry, which is no small advantage; for in war the light cavalry of the natives, called *louti*, are the most audacious freebooters in the world, burning and plundering indiscriminately every place that falls in their way. Madras is thus protected from their attacks; and, in case of siege, every thing of value is removed into the citadel, called Fort St. George.

This fortress, which I examined but very imperfectly, is separated from the town by an esplanade outside the glacis: it stands on the sea-shore, and presents six fronts towards the land, as well as I can recollect, for my notes do not mention this particular. The fort, having been built at several times, is of a very irregular construction; not in regard to the polygon, but in the plan of the fronts, which are almost all different from each other. That towards the north-east is on the Italian model of Sardi. Its opposite, on the south-west, is according to the plan of the chevalier De Ville. Some of the bastions have retired flanks, and others not: the flanks of the northern bastions are casemated. This side is defended by a strong counter-guard; the ditches are excellent, with a cunette in the middle; the counter-way is good, and is countermined, but I do not know whether the chambers of the mines extend beyond the summit of the glacis, nor how far the galleries are carried; and in the

ditches there are neither caponiers nor tenailles. All the works are well-faced with brick, and in complete repair; the covered way is palifaded, and carefully provided with traverses; the barriers and palifadoes are well closed and kept in good condition; the depôts of arms are spacious; and the citadel of Madras, with a good garrison, might hold out in Europe against an army of 30,000 men, for twenty days after the trenches were opened. As this fortress is intended, in case of siege, for the retreat of all the servants of the company, it is necessarily filled with houses; which gives it a dark and unpleasant appearance. On this account the English do not reside in it; even the governor lives in the country, and the rest of the English follow his example. They repair in the morning to the fort for the transaction of business, and remain there till three o'clock in the afternoon, when they return, and the place seems deserted. Even the theatre is in the country; so that the ground to a considerable distance round Madras presents to the view a multitude of gardens, spread over an extent so great, as to prevent persons who reside at the opposite extremities from visiting each other, unless on horseback or in carriages; the palanquins in many instances would be insufficient for the purpose. Some of these gardens are extremely beautiful, and the houses are in general elegant.

The position of Fort St. George is equally fortunate with that of Pondicherry, and is in like manner strengthened on the south side by a river, that washes the extremity of the glacis. Over this river is a handsome bridge of bricks. The west side is protected by an inundation, which the fort can at any time command, by means of a sluice situated at the beginning of the glacis, and defended by the covered way. The northern side, as at Pondicherry, is the only side open to an attack.

The power of the English in this country, however, was not always supported by so formidable a bulwark. The present fortress indeed is impregnable to the Indians ; but the sight of the old fort will give an idea of the feebleness of the first establishments on the coast, and of the slender beginnings from which the English rose to their present greatness.

This was a square building, which is now in the middle of the fort, and in point of size is not equal even to the present depôt of arms. It has been converted into a house, in which the different offices of the company are established. Fort St. George contains a church of the English persuasion : no other religion, indeed is tolerated in the citadel. And elegant structure too has lately been erected, intended for an exchange. The great hall, decorated with portraits of lord Cornwallis and general Meadows, is worthy the attention of travellers. Madras is already numbered in the list of places celebrated for the sumptuousness of their public establishments. The posts for the conveyance of letters, called *tapal*, are well managed ; while two newspapers, a national lottery, a theatre, and a ball-room, raise it to a rivalry with those towns, which are the scenes of luxury and refinement.

The Black Town is what is properly called Madras, and even the Indians still give it the name of Madras-Patnam. This addition of patnam or patam is applicable only to capital towns, though some of very inferior rank still retain it : which is owing to such places having declined from their ancient splendour, or to the name having been applied by the Indians at a time when they were accustomed to behold nothing superior. The Black Town exhibits only a spectacle of filth and dirt ;

none of the streets are either paved, or even covered with sand, but have a soil of black earth, which, mixing with the water, forms large collections of stinking mud, that engender infection, and allow a free passage only to carriages.

The Indians have a vehicle of this kind that is peculiar to themselves, and which, in my account of their machines, I forgot to mention. Much praise indeed is not due for the invention : it exhibits a whimsical and awkward appearance ; the wheels are extremely low, and upon the axle-tree are laid two beams, forming a small cross, to the extremities of which are fixed four upright posts, supporting an extravagantly large head or canopy. This little nook, as it may be called, is entirely open on three of the sides, and inclosed behind only with a piece of cloth : it will scarcely admit two persons, but one may be tolerably at ease, by the help of cushions, upon which he is obliged to sit with his legs bent under him. The carriage is drawn by two oxen abreast, and has a number of small bells fastened to it. It is seldom used in towns ; but the rich and superior class of the natives employ it in their journeys to different parts of the country.

The black population of Madras is very considerable, exceeding even that of Pondicherry. There are several pagodas in the town, some mosques, an Armenian church, and a Portuguese one, of which the service is performed by Capuchins. These monks are subject to the ecclesiastical jurisdiction of the bishop of St. Thomas, a small village at the distance of a league southward of Fort St. George ; and both this prelate and the bishop of Pondicherry, who belongs to the mission of the French Jesuits, are suffragans of the bishop of Goa. The present bishop of St. Thomas is a negro, or at least is de-

scended from an Indian family allied to a Portuguese ; he was born in the country, and is of a mulatto colour.

The preference which the metropolitan bishop of Goa, who is himself a Portuguese, thus exclusively shows to the priests of every description who are connected with his own countrymen, has had the effect of introducing into the religious rites of that mission all the mummery of the Indian idolatry. It is only among the French Jesuits, and in the parochial church of Pondicherry, that the catholic religion is practised with the decorum due to it ; the other churches exhibit only a species of burlesque entertainments. This has perhaps arisen from an idea of making religious impressions upon the Indians through the medium of external objects ; but I did not observe that the Jesuits, who have not departed from the simplicity and decency observed in the European worship, are less successful in making profelytes, than those who have most eagerly given into these extravagancies. I happened to be at Madras in passion-week, and was disgusted at seeing the majestic and awful solemnities prescribed on this occasion, degraded by ridiculous farces. The tragedy of the death of Jesus Christ, and his descent from the cross, was performed in the church. The latter incident was represented by men in the Turkish dress, who ascended ladders, and brought down the figure of a corpse, well executed in point of sculpture, and of which the joints being moveable, and their bend natural, the effect was so strong upon the women who were present, that I perceived some of them to faint. The Blacks then accompanied the corpse to the grave, amidst the noise of the same instruments as the Indians use at their pagodas and in their processions ; thus reducing the ceremonies of our holy religion to a level with the absurdities of idolators.

Though the number of English inhabitants in the presidency of Madras be great, they are all included in three classes; the military, the merchants, and those in civil employments under the company; but the bulk of the population consists of Blacks: there are no European labourers. An individual of the profession of the law, endowed with an active and enterprising mind, a diligence not to be discouraged, and a perseverance that might be mistaken for obstinacy; a man, in short, formed for the accomplishment of great undertakings, if properly supported—the late Mr. Popham; is the first, and hitherto the only person, who has attempted the establishment of a plantation in this country. Of all the productions of the soil, the cultivation of cotton appeared to him best suited to the natural indolence of the Indians, the labour it exacts requiring more attention than vigour. With these views, he formed, with much trouble and expense, a considerable plantation two leagues to the north of Madras: but with all his arrangements, and the pains he employed to provide a supply of water for the soil, his establishment in the year 1794 had not repaid him even the sums which he had laid out upon it. Should his example, however, be followed, his successors, avoiding his faults, and finding the Blacks a little more habituated to labour, may embark in a similar speculation with less expense, and make it turn to better account. Whether it arose from any defect in the methods pursued by Mr. Popham, or from the nature of the ground he had chosen, I am unable to say; but his plants were weak, and the cotton meagre and short. It is not probable, however, that in a project like this he will meet with imitators, those who have money finding it more profitable and less troublesome to employ it in the manufactures of the country. It

would likewise be exposed to a serious disadvantage from a competition with the Blacks, who, obtaining their cotton with infinitely less trouble, leaving it to the spontaneous operation of nature, and being freed besides by their habits from superfluous wants, and having made no advances for which they look for return, would always be able to sell it at an inferior price. There was another defect in the cotton produced in this way, which was not only short in itself, but rendered more so by cleaning it in the mill. As labour is so cheap in this country, it would be much more adviseable to have the cotton picked by the hand, as it would thus not be broken by the action of the cylinder, and would be consequently in better condition for spinning.

The skill of the Indians in the article of spinning is well known; the delicate textures with which they furnish us are a proof of it. Some cotton is spun so exquisitely fine, that the force of the air alone is sufficient to break it; in this case it is worked over the steam of boiling water, which, by moistening the cotton, renders it more ductile, and less liable to break, than when it is dry.

Struck with admiration of their dexterity in these arts, M. de Suffrein conceived and executed the design of removing several families of them to Malta, to form a colony which might instruct the natives of that island in the manufactures of India. This enterprize, however, did not answer the end that was expected: the unhappy subjects of it, finding themselves in a foreign land, among a people with whose manners and customs they were wholly unacquainted, lost every thought but that of returning to their country, and left in their new settlement scarcely a vestige of their transitory abode.

At Madras very handsome handkerchiefs of a large checked pattern, excellent in the colouring,

and of a peculiar fineness, are fabricated. Manufactories for this article were originally established by the Dutch, at a small settlement which they possess four leagues further northward, called *Palliacata*. The beauty of these handkerchiefs soon bringing them into repute, and rendering them objects of general request, the English erected similar manufactories at Madras; but the former retained their superiority, and were universally preferred. Impatient of a rival in any undertaking, the English spared neither pains nor expense in this competition, and by dint of their exertions were able at last to give to their handkerchiefs a degree of beauty and excellence scarcely inferior to those of *Palliacata*. Not satisfied with attaining this point, they resolved on the destruction of the original manufactories; and, in the means they employed for the accomplishment of their end, the pre-eminence of their commercial genius was manifest. With an unanimity, the result of a refined policy, and understanding the art of incurring a temporary loss, that would be attended with an indemnification in the sequel, they suddenly lowered the price of their handkerchiefs twenty per cent. This measure immediately turned the balance of trade in their favour. The Dutch, supposing their rivals to make this reduction in consequence of improvements or economy in the mode of manufacturing the article, or by an establishment on a greater scale, or perhaps by obtaining on better terms the raw materials, made every effort to do the same; but they found a loss where they supposed their rivals to have a profit, and were obliged at last to abandon the attempt altogether, without so much as suspecting the artifice by which they had been duped. The workmen, who were thus thrown out of employ, were immediately engaged by the successful party at Madras, who no sooner found them-

elves the sole masters of this valuable branch of commerce, than they gradually raised the price of the handkerchiefs, so as liberally to repay them for the momentary loss to which they had submitted.

Since this reverse of fortune, Palliacata, which had acquired a degree of animation, has been reduced to a state of complete inactivity: a single vessel only goes there once a year for some bales of merchandize, which the Dutch company orders to be provided, and which constitutes the whole commerce of the district.

The approaches to Madras are uncommonly magnificent, particularly the great road to the west of Fort St. George: the avenues, planted with four rows of trees, majestically announce the residence of no inferior power. A stranger, in entering by this road, conceives the most exalted ideas of the place; but they are soon changed when he arrives at his inn, if this name may be given to two miserable huts in the Black Town, and a house scarcely superior to them in the fort. These inns can furnish no better accommodation than a vile bed placed upon a couch or a form in a large room, in which the guests are obliged to lie indiscriminately together, after the table is removed on which they have supped.

The trade of Madras is still more completely in the hands of the Blacks than that of Pondicherry, the concerns being more extensive and more lucrative, and the sales more brisk. The European merchant entirely neglects the minute details, and looks only at the abstract of the accounts given him by his *dobachi*: a negligence perfectly suited to the manner in which he lives, at a distance from the spot where his affairs are conducted, which he visits only once a-day, and that not regularly, to bestow upon them two or three hours' attention.

The English company calls itself the ally and protector of the nabob of the Carnatic. It has built for him a magnificent palace at a short distance from Fort St. George, where it retains him in its power, and dictates to him its will, concealing the gilt fetters in which he is held by the honour with which it invests him. The semblance of authority is still preserved to this prince, the laws which the company imposes upon his subjects being promulgated in his name; while his real weakness is such as renders it impossible to free himself from the yoke under which he bends. Like another Montezuma, obliged to kiss the hand that oppresses him, he is merely an instrument to serve the purpose of the company as to the Indians, whom a sentiment of respect for the person of their prince retains in their allegiance. The English are the real monarchs, and reign in the room of the nabob, whom they compensate for this state of degradation, with the vain exterior of a mock sovereignty, which he displays at Madras in an English equipage: a luxury new in an Asiatic prince, and which he has bought at the expense of his crown.

The navigation of the Indians is still very defective. That their ships are bad is not from the want of excellent materials. The *teak* wood grows in abundance, and is equal to the oak of Europe. Their vessels are awkward in their form, and are put together with little solidity: they are scarcely ever caulked; and if they were not coated with a composition made for this purpose, some of them would not be able to float. This substance is a mixture of lime and fish-oil; it adheres so closely to the planks of the ship, that it fills all the crevices, and effectually prevents the water from penetrating. It is called by the Indians *galgat*.

They have another preparation, called *sarangousti*,

which they spread over the heads of the nails and joints of the timbers. It is made of dry pitch and fish-oil, which are beaten together till the mixture assumes the consistency of a soft paste; in this state it is applied, and it gives such extraordinary hardness as to turn the edge of the best tempered instruments. These two compositions cannot be too strongly recommended to European mariners.

The Indian vessels are called *parias*. If their hull be defective, the manner of rigging them is not less so. The masts are of teak, and are extremely heavy; the ropes are of cocoa-hair, which they call *kaire*; and they have few blocks and sails. Accordingly, though some of the vessels are so large as to amount even to six hundred tons, they are only adapted for short voyages, which they accomplish with the aid of the monsoons. They are sufficiently numerous to perform the whole carrying business between the coast and Bengal. Their usual cargo is salt and rice. The greater navigation, from coast to coast, is made by vessels of European construction.

Exclusively of the maritime trade between the coasts of India and that to China, the English merchants engage in smuggling adventures to the Moluccas. The profit of this trade is immense, and is proportioned to the dangers that are risked. The ships employed in the voyage must be able to contend with a Dutch sloop of eighteen guns, stationed as a guard-ship off those islands. On approaching the coast, the inhabitants, who are accustomed to this traffic, bring by stealth to the vessels under sail the spices which they have to dispose of, and which they barter at a very low rate. As no satisfaction could be obtained for any outrage they might attempt, and no application could be made to the Dutch company for redress the crews of the ves-

fels employed in this trade never treat with the natives without being armed.

The geography of the peninsula experiences so many variations, from the successive conquests and usurpations which are continually altering the boundaries of the different states, that it cannot be determined with any certainty; a correct account of it now would no longer be so a year hence. We may venture, however, to divide the country into provinces; of which the chief are Trevancore, the Deccan, the Carnatic with Arcot, Madura, Tanjore, Myfore, Golconda, Bijnagar, the Four Sircars, and the territory of the Mahrattas. All these provinces were formerly dependent governments under the Mogul Empire, each having its nabob, and subah. But these viceroys, inspired with presumption and the assurance of impunity from the want of energy in the court of Delhi, conceived the project of rendering themselves independent. The imbecility of the reigning emperor completed their success. Many of them, become sovereigns, disdained the title of nabob, and assumed that of sultan or king, which was more flattering to their pride. The governor of Golconda alone has retained his former title of nizam. Hyder Ally at first contented himself with that of khan; his son Tippoo, when he met his destruction, had that of sultan; the heads of the provinces of Trevancore and Tanjore have taken the title of king. The Mogul emperor however still preserves an ideal dominion over these princes, but it consists merely in some exterior marks of respect which they pay to him, and some warrants which they occasionally solicit, to sanction their successive usurpations, in the same manner as the European powers were used to apply to the see of Rome for bulls, to convey to them an investiture of new possessions. The emperor, who has

lost all his real authority, never rejects such opportunities of performing an act of sovereignty, and always complies with their will.

Among the provinces which thus threw off the yoke of this monarch, the Mahrattas are the only people who, acting upon principles of independence, have abjured the authority of a master. They have accordingly established in the northwest quarter of the peninsula a formidable republic. They have a numerous cavalry, and their influence in the affairs of India, since one of their chiefs, a man of high reputation, filled the post of prime minister to the emperor, has greatly increased. This officer is known by the name of *Sandjab*, which he has rendered famous. His credit at the court of Delhi was the greater, from the extreme incapacity of the emperor. The power of the sovereign was equalled by that of the minister, who, constant in his attachment to his country, forwarded its interests with his master, and brought him to approve of its revolt. The alliance of this republic is of the greatest importance in the political system of India; and the English accordingly spare no efforts or sacrifices to obtain it. It is to the faithful attachment of the Mahrattas, who joined their forces to those of the company, that lord Cornwallis is indebted for his victories over Tippoo. That prince, believing himself sufficiently powerful to conquer alone, disdained to ask for their assistance; not foreseeing that such a neglect would give him one more enemy to contend with. The junction of the Mahratta army turned the tide of conquest to the side of the English, who had before been repulsed from Seringapatam with loss, and induced the necessity of that disadvantageous peace, which was the prelude to the total ruin of Tippoo.

After staying some days at Madras, I sailed for Bengal. In the bay of Bafore, I was opposed by

mists and rain, accompanied with a calm, which forced me to anchor in twelve-fathom water. As the coast is extremely low, the bottom rises so gradually, that a depth of ten or twelve fathom in the bay is at least twelve leagues from the entrance of the river; between which and the beginning of the flats, it rises but three fathom. The pilots go no further out than to the depth of ten fathom, as beyond this there is no danger. They were still therefore at a great distance from me; and, though I fired repeated signals, none of them came. On the second day, the weather having cleared up a little, I bent my sails, and steered to the northward, but not without great anxiety respecting the shoals, with which the mouth of this river abounds, and with the situation of which I was so little acquainted, that, long before I was near them, I was every instant apprehensive of striking. I at last found the pilots at the beginning of the shallows, about half a league from the first buoy. These shallows are formed by sand-banks, which project from the mouth of the river to a great distance into the sea. They are the more dangerous, as there is nothing to indicate their approach, and no land in sight to afford any observations for avoiding them: it is necessary to sound carefully every half-minute, and even this would be insufficient in sailing with a favourable wind and tide, as the vessel would be aground before the line could announce the danger. To prevent accidents of this sort, buoys are placed at regular distances in the track of the channels, which the rapid stream of the Ganges has formed in these banks: the buoys mark the course which the pilots should keep. The same expedient is adopted in the river Elbe in Germany, the mouth of which presents nearly the same difficulties.

The river, upon the banks of which the European settlements in Bengal are situated, is not the

Ganges, and is therefore very improperly called by that name ; it is the river Hoogly, so denominated from the small Indian village which first contributed to render it important. It takes its rise in the Ganges, and may thus be strictly considered as an inferior branch of that river, the principal bed of which runs to the eastward of the Hoogly, and empties itself into the sea by numerous mouths near Chaligam.

The Hoogly is extremely wide at its entrance : in ascending it, the land is not seen till we have advanced a considerable distance ; the banks of the river first appear in sight at Cadjery. The distance between them at the end of the shallows is very great : indeed, when we arrive at this point, we are still in the main, and the pilots, who are stationed there to take charge of the ships that arrive, are provided with vessels capable of encountering the violence of a tempest and a heavy swell : they are stout brigs, and are calculated for every sort of manœuvre. The English company had six of these ships on an old construction, and has added six others, built at Bombay. These last are sloops of sixteen guns, and are capable of serving on occasions as ships of war. Thus the English have twelve pilot-vessels ; and, before the war, the French and Dutch had one each. These vessels lie at anchor at the outer extremity of the shallows. As soon as they are perceived, the ship that arrives fires a gun, and hangs out a flag at the head of her foretop-gallant-mast, when one of them gets under way to meet her. If she proves to be only a small vessel, whose draught of water is not so considerable as to require much skill in bringing her in, one of the officers of the pilot-brig takes charge of her, and the superior returns to his station. But if it is a ship of such burden as to demand the attention of the

master-pilot, he goes on board of her himself, his brig sailing before to point out the track and communicate the soundings, which is done in the day-time by flags, and in the night by lights. These precautions are all indispensable, and, though a multitude of accidents are prevented, they are not always sufficient wholly to guard against them. The tides of the Ganges are prodigiously rapid. The channels, which the stream of this river has formed in the sand-banks at its mouth, are in some places not more than half a league wide. In entering them during the south-west monsoon, the force of the wind and tide together will carry a vessel at the rate of six leagues an hour; in this state a single false stroke of the helm will throw her too much to one side, and, by losing the exact direction of the channel, expose her to the greatest danger, often to the inevitable fate of being wrecked. With the north-east monsoon, on the other hand, the entrance of the river is more tedious and more laborious, but less dangerous. As the wind in this case is always contrary, it is necessary in these channels to tack continually; of consequence, vessels sailing across can make but little way, and the tide carries them to their destination. In executing this manœuvre little skill is required in the pilot; it is merely necessary to put about, whenever the lead announces four fathom and a half of water. The depth of seven fathom denotes the middle of the channel. By continuing this method from side to side, the object is finally attained without much risk.

Our approach to Cadjery, which is on the left bank of the river, may be known by a house, standing on an eminence, belonging to the English company, which keeps a resident there. From this place is seen the point called, from the nature of its shore, *Mud-point*, on the opposite bank. This point

forms the southern extremity of the woods of Sondry, famous for the enormous size of the tigers which are found there, and with which they are filled. This species is the *royal tiger, or tiger properly so called*, of Buffon. These animals are extremely formidable by their strength and activity. Some of them are as large as oxen. Their coat is variegated with stripes of reddish yellow and black, and is whitish under the belly. They are so eager and ferocious in pursuit of their prey, that they have been known to throw themselves into the water, and swim to attack boats on the river.

It is customary in passing Cadjery to hire boats with oars to facilitate the principal manoeuvres necessary in proceeding up the river. Mine being a heavy ship, I employed twelve of these, which accompanied me as far as the roadstead opposite these woods; where, while I was at anchor, they fastened themselves to my vessel behind, as if, in the sea phrase, they were in tow. So many boats presenting a considerable resistance to the tide, and acting with violence upon my cable, the pilot ordered them to leave me, and to range themselves along the side of the river, till, the current being abated, he should call them.

When they had repaired to this new position, they unfortunately perceived on the shore a quantity of dry wood, consisting of branches of dead trees. As this is an article of sale at Calcutta, they landed to cut some of it and load their boats. They were at the distance of about three hundred yards from the vessel, and had scarcely begun their work when we saw them running to the water-side with the strongest marks of terror. This was not without cause, they were pursued by a tiger, of the size of a common calf: we saw it rush out of the wood, and seize upon the hindmost of these men, whom

it carried off in an instant, without meeting with the slightest opposition from the unfortunate being himself, or his companions. The brother alone of the victim appeared afflicted at the event, and did not again leave his boat ; but the rest immediately returned to their employment on shore, persuaded that the tiger was satisfied, and that there was now no danger : this is their general belief.

Notwithstanding the superiority which these creatures possess over human beings by their strength, ferocity, and the arms with which nature has supplied them, a certain instinct seems to tell them, that men by their intellectual faculties are still more formidable than they : hence they avoid inhabited and cultivated places ; or if they sometimes visit them, it is only when compelled by hunger. In ascending the river Hoogly, the village of Coulp is the last settlement of the Indians on the right bank, and the tigers seldom appear so far up. But between this place and the Clive-Islands they are so numerous, that they are sometimes seen in troops on the banks. These islands have been lately brought into a state of improvement for the cultivation of sugar. The clearing of the ground was attended with the loss of a great number of Indians, who were destroyed by these ferocious animals ; for, in cutting down the wood with which the face of the country was covered, they were disturbed in their retreats, and rushed upon the labourers. What will appear extraordinary, these men never attempted to defend themselves, though their number sometimes amounted to five hundred. They believed, that the tiger would be satisfied with carrying off one, and would then cease to appear : of consequence, whenever they perceived one approaching, they ran off in disorder, every one making the best of his way, and trusting to the swift-

ness of his flight, leaving the slowest to be seized and carried off; after which they returned to their work. This scene was repeated every day without increasing the courage of the Blacks; and these continual ravages would not have been attended with the destruction of one of these monsters, if they had not at last been opposed by a few Europeans, who superintended the works, and were well armed. They have now wholly deserted these islands, which no longer afford them a retreat, and have settled on the continent, and augmented the number of those which infest the woods of Sondry.

Continuing to ascend the river, we arrive at Couppy, or Port-Diamond, as it is called by the English, who have provided here *cormors* for their ships; these are large anchors fixed in the ground, to which their vessels are fastened with more security than by their proper moorings.

The English government has in this place port-officers, a large bakehouse, a shambles, and hospitals for its marine. A market is held here, in which the crews of vessels may find in abundance every refreshment which the country produces.

Above this port the bed of the river turns to the left, leaving to the right a very dangerous sand-bank. At a short distance further is the mouth of a large river, improperly called the Old Ganges. It is not till we pass the confluence of these waters, that the borders of the Hoogly begin to be picturesque. Its immense width is here reduced to that of an ordinary large river, and affords the pleasant prospect of both banks.

A little higher on the right is Fulta, a Dutch possession, accustomed formerly, in the prosperous days of that company, to receive ships of considerable burden; but reduced now to so low a state, as to see only a single galliot, sent annually to take in

some bales of goods, prepared in the settlement of Chinfura. This galliot is sometimes accompanied by a smaller vessel; and this forms at present the whole extent of the Dutch commerce in Bengal.

The establishment on shore consists of two houses; of which one is an inn, built partly of bricks, and the other the residence of the commandant. This officer is a negro charged by the company with the care of displaying their flag on a tree, in the manner of a mast. This house is still less splendid than the inn, for it is constructed entirely of straw. The Indian town however is very considerable, and has a bazar, which is well supplied. This small settlement resembles, in one point, all the colonies belonging to the Dutch on the Ganges; that of being the scene of the most unrestrained debauchery. This perfectly suits the disposition of the sailors, who here recruit the number of unhappy females that go to Port-Diamond to administer to the pleasure of the English crews, which are numerous, to contribute to fill their hospitals, and often to leave their lovers sad tokens of remembrance during their life.

My pilot having anchored near this village, I was desirous of going on shore to take a walk; but, as the current was too strong for me to reach the town, I landed in an adjacent meadow. The first thing that met my view was a pangolin, which I pursued to the entrance of its retreat, when I made a stroke at it with my sword which broke between two of the scales.

I then proceeded towards the village, passing through a very thick wood, across which was a path about three feet wide. I was preceded by a pion, and followed by two boys, whom the fircar of one of my friends, who had expected my arrival, had sent to meet me. To my surprise the pion sudden-

ly made a long leap, and ran off as fast as he could : I advanced to learn the cause, and was equally terrified myself on seeing an enormous serpent, that lay stretched across the path in which I was walking. Its length was so immense, that I could see neither its head nor its tail, which were concealed in the bushes. Its colour was brown ; it crept very slowly along, and appeared to be of the size of an eighteen-inch cable ; that is to say, as nearly as I could judge, about eighteen inches in circumference. I followed the example of my soldier, and without affecting a courage, which would have been the more ill-timed, as my sword, at best but a sorry weapon in such extremity, was already broken, jumped over this monster, and proceeded with a little more alertness than the usual pace. The two boys behind me, alarmed at seeing a pion fly, and even an European follow him with tolerable quickness, ran back, and did not rejoin me till the next day on board my vessel.

After ascending some leagues higher on the river, we find on the right bank the anchoring ground of Mayapour. This place was formerly to the French, what Fulta was to the Dutch : it was the road where such vessels of the French company stopped, that were unable to proceed to Chandernagore for want of the necessary depth of water. This place also has undergone the same fate as Fulta, in proportion as the affairs of France have declined in this quarter. It is at present even in a worse condition than that village ; for it has now no European houses, and no flag ; a few huts and a miserable bazar scarcely bear testimony to its former existence. No traces recal the idea of the commerce of this place during the splendour of the French company : a striking example of the vicissitudes of human institutions ! Mayapour was a port

of extensive trade; and vessels of fifteen hundred tons burden frequented its road in great numbers, dispensing abundance and luxury, when Port-Diamond did not as yet exist. At present, the latter is flourishing, while the former is deserted, and offers nothing but its name to remind the traveller of its ancient opulence: the common destiny of all the French establishments, which a constant succession of adverse events has condemned to oblivion.

At last, after proceeding a few leagues above Mayapour, the gardens and sumptuous palaces, which meet the eye, announce our approach to the capital of the East, the metropolis of the English empire in Asia, and the finest colony in the world. The magnificence of the edifices, the luxury which has converted the banks of the river into delightful gardens, and the costliness and elegance of their decorations, all denote the opulence and power of the conquerors of India and the masters of the Ganges.

The windings of this river conceal in some degree the town of Calcutta, which we do not perceive till we are within a short distance of it. Fort-William, the finest fortress that exists out of Europe, presents itself immediately to the sight, which it astonishes by its grandeur and the splendour of the buildings, that are seen above its ramparts. The houses, which form the first front of the tower to the end of the glacis, are so many magnificent palaces, some of them having a peristyle of four-and-twenty pillars. All these structures, disposed in an irregular line through a space of more than a league, form an inconceivably striking prospect, and give to the town a most noble and majestic appearance.

Calcutta is the only European settlement of any importance on this bank of the Ganges: the other nations have fixed upon the left side, while the Eng-

lish alone have preferred the right. Whatever were the causes of this preference, the situation is ill-chosen. The ground is not sufficiently raised above the level of the river, and frequently, in the high tides, the esplanade which separates the citadel from the town, if not totally inundated, is at least covered with water in different parts so as to be impassable.

The air of Calcutta is by no means healthy, its position between the river and a large lake in its rear subjecting it to the influence of unwholesome exhalations: but the European inhabitants remedy this defect by living in the country. There is however one inconvenience that cannot be remedied, which is the situation of its port. This stands exactly at the turn of two points, which augment the violence of the current in every state of the tide. The bar is frequently here of sufficient strength to drive the vessels from their moorings. The currents being extremely violent, particularly in July and August, the time of the melting of the snow on the mountains in the interior parts of the country, the first effect of the flood-tide at these periods is, not only to stop the course of the river, but to surmount it with so much force as to require a rapid course of its own. Bengal lies so low, that when the sea, increased by these torrents, rushes in this manner into the bed of the river, its violence is irresistible. The ebb current, meeting a similar obstacle, has at first a tendency to raise itself, but the flood being impelled with a superior force, gains the ascendancy and passes over it. From this shock results a very heavy and foaming surge, which the tide pushes before it with a prodigious rapidity, to the imminent danger of every boat that is not prudent enough to keep out of its way.

This bar has never its full effect, but on one side

of the river at a time ; and the mischief it occasions may be avoided by taking the side on which it is weakest, which may easily be perceived. Every salient angle in the windings of the river, presenting an obstacle to its progress, throws it towards the contrary bank, and it continues thus till repelled by another projection, which turns it again. The Indians flock to the borders of the river, impatient to wet themselves with the water, which they believe to be salutary, and which they sprinkle over their bodies with devotion, uttering as they do it exclamations of joy.

Calcutta is situated so as to receive the whole force of the bar, which sometimes, and especially in the spring-tides, is very great. To render this anchorage as wretched as possible, it is interspersed with numerous sand-banks, even opposite to the fort and the town. The necessary operations of the port are thus checked ; and when the depth of the river is reduced by the ebb, its course, obstructed by these impediments, increases in rapidity, and occasions innumerable accidents, such as destruction of boats, damage of vessels, loss of anchors, &c.

I was witness to an instance of this sort, which put the whole anchorage into confusion. The parias, which are generally numerous, moor themselves above the European ships, opposite the Black Town. They are usually fastened together, and thus present to the current a long line of vessels, of which the cables act together. This practice is not unaccompanied with risk, but it prevents the vessels from yawing, that is, swinging from one side to the other, tracing an arc of a circle, of which the anchor is the centre, and the cable the radius. This motion renders the strain upon the cable unequal, often drags the anchor, and is the occasion, when any other vessel is within the extent of the arc thus

described, of very serious mischief. In this view therefore the practice of fastening these vessels together is of advantage. But unfortunately, at the time of which I speak, the cable of one of the parias, at the extremity of the line, parted, and the vessel immediately fell athwart the hawse of the next. Their cables are generally good, but their anchors are abominable: that of the second paria gave way, and two were thus adrift. The rest followed in succession, and in a quarter of an hour they were all in disorder, to the number of a hundred and fifty at least. In this condition they could make no effectual resistance to the current, and were driven forcibly against the nearest European ships at anchor behind them. The crews of these ships encountered them with hatchets, cutting and damaging in every way such as fastened on them: the number however was too great; the tide threw them athwart the hawse of those that were moored, thus carrying away their bowsprits, while the anchors and cables, unequal to such an exertion, also gave way. The whole was now a scene of disorder: the ships mixed with the parias, and nothing was heard but the noise of masts and yards breaking. Some had the precaution to run aground, others continued to increase the confusion, from which few succeeded in escaping entirely. The direction of the tide exempted such only as were out of the stream; all the rest shared in the danger. Let the reader figure to himself nearly three hundred vessels turned suddenly adrift, endeavouring to grapple with each other, and carried away at the same time by the current with a rapidity that was sure to be the destruction of all such as should strike upon the sand-banks; let him add to this, the cries, oaths, imprecations, and blasphemies of the crews of so many nations, speaking different

languages, without understanding each other, and he will have a faint idea of the scene that was then before me. Had the vessels that were driven from their moorings thrown out the anchors which they had still on board, they would all inevitably have been lost; but they had the wisdom to retain them till they were clear of their companions; and, as soon as they found themselves free, they anchored wherever they could till the return of the tide, or assistance should be sent from the port. I happened to be on board my vessel at the beginning of the confusion. I was at anchor in the middle of the river, and nearly in the centre of the harbour, in a situation in which I could not possibly have avoided the general fate, had not a circumstance luckily determined me upon taking measures to withdraw from the peril, which I perceived approaching. A large English ship, removing from the crowd, compelled me to the only step that could possibly have saved me; for it came towards me with so much rapidity, that I had scarcely time to cut my cable with an axe, to prevent a rencontre that might have proved fatal to us both. I suffered my vessel to drift, without anchoring again till I got below the citadel, to a distance of a mile and a half. Here I moored with two anchors, and remained in safety till order was re-established at Calcutta, when I returned to my station.

An accident of this kind is the most fortunate event that can happen for the officers of the port. They first sell, either of themselves, or by means of their Blacks, the anchors, that may be wanted, and then take a declaration from each captain, specifying those which he has lost, their weight and marks, a description of the ends of the cables which are fastened to them, the spot near which they may be expected to be found, and in short every particular

that may assist in their recovery. This declaration is formally registered, and the captains hear no more of the matter.

I lost five in the course of three weeks ; and I did not fail, as to the first two, to make the declarations which were required. Each time I had no doubt, when I left the office, that the anchor in question was as safe as if on board my vessel, and that I should certainly have it the moment I claimed it. After losing two, I thought I had a right to demand one, and I requested that the first might be raised, offering at the same time to pay the expenses.

The person to whom I addressed myself was an ingenuous sort of personage, who plundered upon principle : he believed, that to regulate his conduct by honour or honesty was merely to be a dupe, injuring himself without benefit to any one, for that others would continue to cheat if he did not. He accordingly laughed at my simplicity, and politely advised me to think no more of my anchors. As the loss however was of importance to me, and it would require a large sum to replace them, I was loath to take this advice, and I redoubled my inquiries and complaints. I had to apply to the port-captain T***, whose honesty was proverbial : he had amassed in this way a considerable fortune, and had since been seized with scruples as to the irregular proceedings of the officers of the port. His conscience did not urge him to the restitution of what he had acquired, but he wished to prevent others from doing the same. This was by no means agreeable to his colleagues, who, jealous of all interference in their concerns, paid little regard to the commands of an aged captain, whose physical and moral activity was very unequal to the task of watching over them ; and thus,

with all the honesty of their chief, the subalterns were knaves.

Mr. T***, in the English manner, *damning his eyes and soul*, swore that *my anchors should be found and returned to me*. The first part of his oath was accomplished; but the second was dispersed by the winds, for I never saw my anchors again. He very obligingly gave me an order to be supplied with a sloop, divers Blacks, and a marine officer, to enable me to raise them myself. With this I returned in high spirits to the office of the port, where, after waiting half an hour, a person came to speak to me, who read the order twice over, and then carried it to a second, who also read it and sent it to a third, who was busy, and answered *very well*. It was not till an hour more, that, seeing me resolved to wait, this last took off his spectacles, and, approaching me, inquired my business. I told him that I had brought an order from Mr. T***, which would inform him. *Very well*, said he; and taking up the order, he put on his spectacles, after wiping them for some time, read the paper twice, returned it to its place, repeated his *very well*, and turned his back upon me.

I begged him to give directions on the subject, and inform me when I should be furnished with the articles mentioned in the paper; adding, that it was a matter of urgency, as my vessel was lying at single anchor, and that I had not another on board. The fatal *very well* was all the answer I could obtain. The person to whom I had originally applied, and who had advised me to think no more of my anchors, now came in, and took up the order; after asking permission of the other, who replied by a slight inclination of the head and the two words he had used with me: it seemed indeed as if he knew no other. At last I was directed to call again the next day.

I immediately provided myself with new anchors to insure the safety of my vessel : and, on the morrow, faithful to my appointment, I waited on Mr. *Very-well*, who at this time did not utter a word. An apprenticed pilot told me, that he was sent to attend me. I left the office without delay, and hastened to the sloop that was allotted me, with a diver and twenty Blacks. In passing my vessel, I took also ten of the best of my crew, and two boats of the country, which were then in my employ, which I manned with my own people, placing an officer in each. Arrived at the spot where I had lost my anchor, I endeavoured in vain by the assistance of the men belonging to the port to find them. Their awkwardness was so great, and appeared so unnatural, that I suspected some trick. I therefore ordered my officers in the boats to drag, pointing to the place near which I supposed one of the anchors to be sunk, and they found it at the first attempt. The diver was then sent to examine its situation, and fasten to it a rope with a sliding knot ; but he had scarcely reached the bottom, when the log-line which I had employed to drag with lost its hold. I now saw, that it had been privately ordered, that I should not succeed. My men dragged again, and again found the anchor : but while I was preparing the slip-knot, the pilot, on pretence of assisting me, drew the log-line against the side of the sloop, and it broke. We were thus obliged a third time to recommence the attempt, and the diver made another fruitless trial to fasten the rope ; at last he pretended that the anchor was sunk too deep in the mud, and said, that he was too much fatigued to dive any more. During these operations the flood-tide had been increasing, and it was now so strong, that it was necessary to suspend our efforts. The pilot agreed to leave the sloop at an-

chor on the spot, to serve as a mark in resuming our attempts on the morrow : to which I consented. At day-break however I looked in vain for the sloop ; it was no longer there. I hastened to the port-officers, and was told, that they were wholly ignorant what was become of it, and they pretended to send in every direction to make inquiries : a trouble they might have saved themselves, for they knew perfectly well where it was. On the third day, they informed me, that the sloop was found, and they added to this information an account of the expenses which had been incurred, and which must immediately be paid ; so much a day for the sloop, so much for the pilot for so many days, so much for the *Lascars ditto*, so much for the diver *ditto*, so much for port-charges, so much for the furniture of the sloop, so much for the cable, which broke, so much for the anchor, which was lost in consequence, so much for the Blacks who recovered the vessel, so much for those who brought it back to the port, so much for repairing the damages it had sustained ; in short, there was no end to the items, of which the sum total amounted to five hundred and sixty-seven sicca rupees. It was useless to dispute these charges ; the business must be ended and the money paid. When I returned to the officer for the purpose, one of the clerks pointed with his pen to Mr. *Very-well*, who took it without saying a word, cast his eye over the bill, counted the rupees, saluted me with a *very well*, and dismissed me ; determined in my heart never to attempt the recovery of another anchor, though I should lose them by dozens. This instance was enough : I had lost in expenses more than the value of the anchor, which I had dragged for to no purpose, and was unable to recover any of the others.

I complained loudly of this imposition ; but was

answered only by a shrug of the shoulders, and the cold consolation, "It is a sad thing for you, but every body must live." In reality, foreign vessels never recover any thing which is lost in this anchorage. Some English captains, indeed, who are favoured, may occasionally experience a better treatment; but these exceptions are few. The officers of the port seize the opportunity of low water to raise the anchors that have been lost, and they sell them without scruple to whoever may want them.

I hope to be excused this slight fall of resentment, which the recollection of the injustice of which I have been the spectator and the victim has torn from me: I could not resist the impulse, nor abstain from the disclosure of such odious practices, though at the risk of offending certain individuals whom I have avoided naming. It is the last time, however, that I shall cite any one before the tribunal of the reader; hereafter I shall leave to that of their own conscience those who, renouncing every sentiment of honour and hospitality, can employ the portion of authority with which they are intrusted, in robbing at the distance of five thousand leagues from their country, the people whom they ought to protect. At the extremity of Asia all Europeans are countrymen, or at least should consider themselves as such.

The citadel of Calcutta is an octagon, on the first plan of Vauban. Five of the faces are regular, while the forms of the other three, which front the river, are according to the fancy of the engineer, by whom the fortrefs was built. As no approach is to be feared on this side, and the citadel can only be attacked by water, the river coming up to the glacis, it was merely necessary to present to vessels making such attempt a superiority of fire, and to provide the means of discovering them at a distance,

in order to disable them the moment they should arrive within cannon-shot. These purposes have been attained by giving the citadel towards the water the form of a large salient angle, the faces of which enfilade the course of the river. From these faces the guns continue to bear upon the object, till it approaches very near the capital: but then they are flanked on each side by a front parallel to the border of the river, which would fire with great effect on vessels lying with their broadsides opposite to it. This part is likewise defended by adjoining bastions and a counter-guard that covers them. The five regular fronts are on the land-side; the bastions have all very salient orillons, behind which are retired circular flanks extremely spacious, and an inverse double flank at the height of the berme, in the same situation as the tenaille of Belidor. This double flank would be an excellent defence, and would the better serve to retard the passage of the ditch, as from its form it cannot be enfiladed. The orillon preserves it from the effect of ricochet-shot, and it is not to be seen from any parallel. The assailants must gain possession of the covered way, make strong lodgments there, and construct batteries of a superior force, before they can silence it, for it can only be cannonaded from the counterscarp. The berme opposite the curtain serves as a road to it, and contributes to the defence of the ditch, like a fausse-braie. The ditch is dry, with a cunette in the middle, which receives the water of the Ganges by means of two sluices, that are commanded by the fort: the counterscarp and covered way are excellent. From some air-holes which I saw in the ramparts, I suppose the master-gallery to have been constructed behind the counter-forts of the revêtement. The glacis are mined, if I may judge from the gates or entrances to the galleries which I

law at the re-entering angles of the covered way, on the side towards the country : every curtain is covered with a large half-moon, without flanks or bonnet, or redoubt ; but the faces mount thirteen pieces of artillery each, thus giving to the defence of these ravelins a fire of six-and-twenty guns. The demi-bastions, which terminate the five regular fronts on each side, are covered by a counter-guard, of which the faces, like the half-moons, are pierced with thirteen embrasures. These counter-guards are connected with two redoubts, constructed in the place of arms of the adjacent re-entering angles : the whole is faced and palisadoed with care, is kept in admirable condition, and can make a vigorous defence against any army however formidable. The advanced works are executed on an extensive scale, and the angles of the half-moons, being extremely acute, project a great way into the country, so as to be in view of each other beyond the flanked angle of the polygon, and take the trenches in the rear at an early period of the approach.

The name of this citadel is Fort William. It is larger and capable of a more regular and scientific defence than that of Fort St. George at Madras. It is not, like Fort St. George, filled with houses, but contains only the buildings that are necessary, such as the residence of the governor, quarters for the officers and troops, and arsenals. Exclusively of these, the interior of the fort is perfectly open, and offers nothing to the sight but superb grass-plots, gravel walks planted occasionally with trees, balls, bombs, cannons, and whatever can give to the place a grand, noble, and military appearance. Each gate has a house over it destined for the residence of a major.

These houses, like every other in the fort, are so

many magnificent palaces. At the period of my last voyage, the governor was colonel Morgan, who filled the station with honour, and behaved to strangers with great politeness. One day, on leaving table, we accompanied him to his closet where was preserved with extraordinary care a superb full-length portrait of Lewis XV. in complete armour: it had been taken at Pondicherry, and had thence been removed to Bengal. The colonel was eager to draw my attention to it. I was pleased with the respect that was paid to it, but felt at the same time a sentiment of regret at seeing it in the hands of our enemies: it seemed as if his majesty was a prisoner of war. This idea re-called strongly to my memory the series of our defeats in Asia, and forced from me a sigh, which did not escape the governor; but his delicate and constant politeness soon dissipated the melancholy impression which these reflections wrought upon my mind.

The governor-general of the English settlements, east of the Cape of Good Hope, resides at Calcutta. As there is no palace yet built for him, he lives in a house on the esplanade opposite the citadel. The house is handsome, but by no means equal to what it ought to be for a personage of so much importance. Many private individuals in the town have houses as good; and if the governor were disposed to any extraordinary luxury, he must curb his inclination for want of the necessary accommodation of room. The house of the governor at Pondicherry is much more magnificent.

As we enter the town, a very extensive square opens before us, with a large piece of water in the middle, for the public use. The pond has a grass-plot round it, and the whole is inclosed by a wall breast-high, with a railing on the top. The sides of this inclosure are each nearly five hundred yards in

length. The square itself is composed of magnificent houses, which render Calcutta not only the handsomest town in Asia, but one of the finest in the world. One side of the square consists of a range of buildings occupied by persons in civil employments under the company, such as writers in the public offices. Part of the side towards the river is taken up by the old fort, which was the first citadel built by the English after their establishment in Bengal. It is an indifferent square, with extremely small bastions, that can mount at most but one gun, though the sides are pierced for two. The fort is without a ditch, and is no longer used for a fortification : the ramparts are converted into gardens, and on the bastions and in the inside of the fort, houses have been built for persons in the service of the government, particularly the officers of the custom-house, who transact their business there. These fortifications are so much reduced from the scale on which they were originally constructed, that the line of defence is now only a hundred and forty or a hundred and fifty yards in length, and the front not more than two hundred. Though this small fort was much superior to that which the English had built at first at Madras, it could not protect them from the resentment of the nabob of Bengal, Suraja Dowla, with whom they were at war : it was taken, and such of the English troops as escaped fled for safety to Cadjery, where also they were besieged. The conquerer, when he got possession of the fort at Calcutta, had the prisoners which he took there thrust one upon another into a hole, outside the fort, from which those only were fortunate enough to come out alive who happened to be uppermost in the heap ; the rest were all suffocated. In remembrance of so flagrant an act of barbarity, the English, who were conquerers in their turn, erected a mon-

ument between the old fort and the right wing of the building occupied by the civil officers of the company, on the very spot where the deed was committed. It is a pyramid, truncated at the top, and standing upon a square pedestal, having a design in sculpture on each of its sides, and an inscription in the English and Moorish languages, describing the occasion on which it was erected. It is surrounded with an iron railing to prevent access to it, has shrubs planted about it, and exhibits a mournful appearance, not unfavourable to the event which it is intended to commemorate.

Close to the old fort is the theatre, which does not accord in appearance with the general beauty of the town, and in which there are seldom dramatic representations for want of performers.

There are two churches of the English establishment at Calcutta, one of which is built in a superb and regular style of architecture, with a circular range of pillars in front, of the doric order, and beautiful in their proportion; the cornice and architrave, ornamented with the triglyphs, are in the same excellent taste, and the edifice altogether is a model of grandeur and elegance.

There are also, besides these regular establishments, a catholic church belonging to the Portuguese mission, another of the Greek persuasion, in which the service is performed by monks of the order of St. Basil, an Armenian conventicle, a synagogue, several mosques, and a great number of pagodas: so that nearly all the religions in the world are assembled in this capital.

The Black Town is to the north of Calcutta, and contiguous to it: it is extremely large; and its population, at the time of my last voyage, was computed at six hundred thousand Indians, women and children included.

So considerable a town ought to possess a vigi-

lant police ; but in this respect it is very defective. Those who disturb the public tranquillity are indeed apprehended, but the condition of the town itself is disgustingly unclean. Most of the streets have a small canal on each side, serving as a drain both for them and the houses, that could not otherwise be inhabited, on account of their dampness ; for the Ganges, in the great swells, rises to the level of many of the streets, so that it is impossible to dig any where without finding water. These canals, which are a foot and half, and in some places two feet wide, and not more than three deep, are reservoirs of filth, that emit the most unwholesome exhalations. Such animals as die in the streets or in the houses are thrown into them, and they lie there and putrify. From want, sickness, or accident, many a poor wretch of the human species also expires in the streets : I have seen an instance of this, where the body has remained two days without being taken away by the police. When this happens, the remains are thrown in like manner into the canals, and thus add to the putrefaction. The natives are sufficiently cleanly as to their persons and houses ; but, having removed from the latter every thing which would occasion filth, they conceive themselves to have done all that is necessary. They leave even their ordure at the door or in the street, and, though they complain of the stench, will not give themselves the trouble to remove it.

These remains of men and animals, engendering putrefaction in the midst of the living, would eventually produce the plague, if the jackals, who sometimes traverse the streets by throngs in the night, howling dreadfully and devouring every thing in their way, did not prevent it. I have seen the body of a poor creature lying dead at my door (the one I have just spoken of) serve two nights for

food to some of these hungry animals. The first night they carried away the head and other parts of it. The body, without limbs, was rolling in the dust all the next day, and trodden upon indiscriminately by the men and beasts that passed, without any person having the humanity to remove it: the second night it was either entirely devoured or carried away, and I was relieved from so disgusting a spectacle.

What is not consumed in this manner by the jackals remains for the ravens and eagles, with which the town abounds. They are seen on the houses, watching for every thing that is thrown into the streets, and they will drop without fear into the middle of a crowd to seize their prey. Great care is taken not to destroy them, as they contribute to the cleanliness of the town, and in that view are extremely useful. They are in general daring and voracious. I have seen a raven, in the bazar called *territa*, seize upon a fish in the hands of an old negro woman who had just purchased it. I lived opposite this market-place, the neighbourhood of which was the resort of an immense number of eagles, attracted thither by the smell which arose from the place. One day my cook, coming across the yard with a roasted fowl, brought nothing to table but the dish; the fowl was in the talons of an eagle, that, having robbed him of it, flew with it to the top of the house and tranquilly feasted upon it before our eyes.

All the houses in India have *argamasse* roofs, that is to say, are flat, with a balustrade round them. It is there that the inhabitants in the morning and evening take the air. Some are ornamented with a circular range of pillars on the first story, making a sort of gallery, to which they retire when the heat of the day is over.

With respect to living, the fare is but indifferent at Calcutta. Provisions for the table are confined to butcher's meat, a fowl now and then, but little or no game, and scarcely a greater quantity of fish. Mutton is almost universally the preferable and standing dish.

In the summer a swarm of flies of every kind prevails, and is extremely tormenting. The muskitoes beset one so obstinately, are so easily provoked and so extremely insatiable, that too many precautions cannot be taken against them. To be secure from their attacks, it is the custom to wear within doors, if one stays any time, whether for meals or any other purpose, pasteboard round the legs. The most eager after flesh is the large blue fly, which settles upon the dishes and infects the meat, that is obliged on that account to be covered: it will contend with the guests for the victuals they are eating, and will follow the morsels as they convey them to their mouths. It is equally remarkable for thirst, and will throw itself into a goblet the moment any kind of liquor is poured into it: to prevent this the goblet is covered with a silver lid made for the purpose. In short, these insects are insupportable; they realize every thing which Virgil has said of the harpies, and twenty times, by their persecution, have they driven me from the table.

To chase away the flies, and occasion a freer circulation of the air, many houses have a large fan hanging from the ceiling over the eating table, of a square form, and balanced on an axle fitted to the upper part of it. A servant, standing at one end of the room, puts it in motion by means of a cord which is fastened to it, in the same manner as he would ring a bell. Besides this, there is a servant behind the chair of each individual with another kind of fan,

made of a branch of the palm-tree. The stalk serves for a handle, and the leaves, fastened together and cut into a round or square shape, give it the appearance of a flag. By these contrivances a little fresh air is procured.

It is chiefly in Bengal, where smoking after meals is customary, that the *hooka* is in use. Every *hooka-badar* prepares separately that of his master in an adjoining apartment, and, entering all together with the dessert, they range them round the table. For half an hour there is a continued clamour, and nothing is distinctly heard but the cry of silence, till the noise subsides and the conversation assumes its usual tone. It is scarcely possible to see through the cloud of smoke which fills the apartment. The effect produced by these circumstances is whimsical enough to a stranger, and if he has not his *hooka* he will find himself in an awkward and unpleasant situation. The rage of smoking extends even to the ladies; and the highest compliment they can pay a man is to give him preference by smoking his *hooka*. In this case it is a point of politeness to take off the mouth-piece he is using, and substitute a fresh one, which he presents to the lady with his *hooka*, who soon returns it: This compliment is not always of trivial importance; it sometimes signifies a great deal to a friend, and often still more to a husband. Tobacco forms but a small part of the ingredients that are burnt in this instrument: dried fruits, sugar, and other things are made use of, which, added to the rose-water with which the tube of the instrument is wetted, give a taste and fragrance to the smoke that are extremely agreeable; the smoke too, by passing through the water before it reaches the mouth, acquires a coolness that renders it still more pleasant.

Conveyance by the palanquin is in use at Bengal,

as on the coast of the peninsula ; but Calcutta, exclusively of this mode, abounds with all sorts of carriages, chariots, whiskies, and phaëtons, which occasion in the evening as great a bustle as in one of the principal towns of Europe. There are also a great number of saddle-horses, some of the Persian breed, of exquisite beauty, but no Arabians, except a small sort called *pooni*, which are very much in vogue for phaëtons. All these animals are faulty ; many of them vicious ; for they are trusted to Moorish grooms, who know indeed how to feed and fatten them, but who teach them at the same time the most incorrigible habits. A friend of mine having given me the free use of his stud, his Moorish grooms, after following me one day to the public walk, as was usual, were so displeas'd with the quickness of my pace, that they determin'd not to be expos'd to it again. I know not what they did to the horses, but I could never, subsequently to this period, make any of them go faster than a walk. Having a desire a few days afterwards to take a ride, I was scarcely out of the stable, and had the reins in my hand, when my horse began his capers. I applied the spur, and he was still more restive. I patted and coaxed him ; it was of no use. I dismounted ; I examined the bridle, the bit, and the curb ; I even took it off, and replaced it myself : I removed the saddle, to see that nothing improper had been put underneath ; I inspect'd his tail and his shoes : every thing was right, and as it ought to be ; and all this time the animal was perfectly quiet. I mounted him again, and he readily set off walking without waiting to be told ; but the moment I attempt'd to make him trot, he instantly recommenc'd his tricks. I then applied the spur unsparingly to his side ; upon which, without advancing a step, he play'd such antics, that I thought he would have kill'd me. Yet this was

the same horse I had rode two days before, and which had then shown in every respect the utmost gentleness and obedience. I resigned him to the Moor, who immediately led him in a canter to the stable. I shall make no comment on this singular incident, and should in vain be asked to explain it. I relate precisely what I saw, and no more. A similar circumstance occurred to me at Yanaon with a horse of Mr. Demars.

The English have begun to improve the breed of the Bengal horses: they have crossed the Persian mares with English stallions, and, to excite emulation, have established races similar to those of Newmarket and Epsom. In 1794, I saw a horse that had been brought from England contend on the course with a most noble animal of the Persian breed; but the English one conquered, and won, in two successive heats every bet that was made, to the great joy of its countrymen, who cried in transport, "Old England for ever!" It should be observed, that this was only a week after the horse had been landed. Notwithstanding its confinement on board, and the fatigue of so long a voyage, it was still able to contend successfully with a fresh and well trained Arabian: a proof that the English breed surpasses that of every other country in fleetness.

Though carriages are so numerous at Calcutta, they are never used for travelling. Almost all journeys are made by water. Bengal is so intersected with rivers and canals, that you can go to any part of it in a boat. For this purpose the richer class of people make use of a conveyance called *bazaras*. Nothing can exceed the elegance and convenience of these little vessels. They have commodious apartments, like a house, and are followed by a large boat containing a kitchen and its furniture, so that a person may travel in this country

more pleasantly than in any other part of the world, and without experiencing greater fatigue, than if he were all the time in his own house.

A great many ships are built at Calcutta, and in the yards are several stocks well filled; but these vessels are very expensive. They are extremely solid, and are made of teak wood, which has the quality of rotting much more slowly than oak. Vessels which are built of it will accordingly last a very long time, if kept from running aground; for the wood is oily, which prevents it from decaying; but being free from knots, it splits so easily, that a single stroke of an axe upon one end of a beam a foot thick will divide it quite through to the other end. Oak on the contrary is full of knots, which add to its power of resistance; but it is by no means so durable as teak.

The privilege of the company is so great as to prevent any individual from trading to any part of Europe, or at least to England; but from one place to another in India the trade is free, and is very considerable both to China and elsewhere. The river Hoogly is in consequence covered with vessels, which add to the opulence and industry of Calcutta. The wealth of this place is indeed extraordinary; silver money they will scarcely deign to mention; they reckon only by the *gulmohur*, a piece of gold of the value of sixteen rupees, or forty-two livres, estimating the piece-of-eight at five livres five sous. The Indians have the practice of clipping the coin, like the Jews in Europe, so that, on receiving a sum of money, it is necessary to be provided with a *ferraff*, who weighs and values the different pieces.

The money of the people is the *cowries* of the Maldivé-Islands. The trade of Bengal is in the hands of the *sircars*, who are there what the *dobiches*

are on the coast. These fircars are Bramins, who lose no part of their dignity or importance by becoming merchants. They are known by a string of cotton, of seven threads, which they wear next their skin, in the manner of a scarf, from right to left, and are assisted by clerks, who have the privilege of composing a separate cast, and look upon themselves as a division of that of the Bramins, subordinate indeed to them, but superior to all other casts.

Bengal is at present the true country of the Bramins. Their names terminate almost always in *ram*; a distinction of honour answering nearly to the French *de*, the German *von*, or the *don* of the Spaniards, with this difference, that it follows the name instead of preceding it. The name of my fircar was Chiffou; but, adding the final syllable of etiquette, he was called Chiffouram. He was intelligent, honest, and, what is a very rare quality in a fircar, but little greedy after gain.

The ease with which these people learn any thing is wonderful: they all both speak and write the French, English, Portuguese, Moorish, Malabar, and their own sacred language; which last no one understands that does not belong to their cast. Some modern authors, and particularly the English, have made us acquainted with passages of their sacred books, their *Veidam* and their *Ezourveidam*; and in the national library at Paris is a translation of the *Cormovedam*. I respect the profound knowledge of these authors; I pretend not to call their honour in question; but would rather believe, since they affirm it, that the translations they give us are authentic, or at least that they think so themselves. I shall only remark, how much it is to be wished, that this sacred language of the Bramins were publicly known, that we may all be enabled to profit

by the light which must result from an acquaintance with the annals of so ancient and so learned a people. I am far from wishing to throw doubts upon such supposed books of theirs as have been made known to us: my opinion, besides, would have but little weight against authorities so great; yet it appears to me, that whoever has been personally acquainted with the Bramins, and has studied their character and prejudices, must be struck with the unusual marks of confidence which the communication of such passages implies, and the inferences to which such confidence would lead. If a person thus acquainted with them were disposed to make objections as to these passages, he might say, "The Bramins are by no means communicative; it is a point of their religion even, to conceal from all the world the knowledge of their language and their books. We must therefore suppose, that some of their chiefs, for they alone have the custody of the books and the law, have conquered the aversion they naturally entertained for foreign casts; have lost all remorse at so flagrant a renunciation of their precepts; and have chosen to risk their being excommunicated from their cast, which they value above life itself, rather than disoblige a stranger, who might have asked them for so important communications."

I am aware, that these writings are now matters of general notoriety; that the most celebrated authors are eager to propagate them: fragments of these sacred books are printed in almost every publication; travellers have even professed to have acquired a perfect knowledge of the sanscrit language at Bengal. All this is so common, that I ought to believe it, and I do so, though these Bramins are greatly under the influence of their religion, which imposes a law upon them to conceal from us what

we thus pretend to know ; though a much lighter fault will subject them to the loss of their cast, a calamity which they will sacrifice every thing to, avoid, or, when this has happened, to regain the privilege ; though even when lost irrecoverably, the person so situated still remains invariably attached to it, and does not on that account the less completely despise all other casts ; consequently, never endeavours to avenge himself by betraying his own : in short, though it were possible to believe, that, to get rid of the importunities of those who solicited them, they had entered into an agreement among themselves, to communicate merely indifferent circumstances, with the hope of being left quiet as to other matters, or had even invented what has been told us, for the express purpose of putting an end to the inquiries of Europeans, by pretending to satisfy us, and thus conceal more effectually all knowledge of their real mysteries,—in spite of all this, can I do other than believe what has been told us by so many respectable authors ? But let me be suffered once more to remark, that if the communications which the Bramins have made to us be true, they must have transgressed the laws of their religion ; that they have so far betrayed their trust, they must have lost that inviolable attachment to it, which for so many ages has maintained in them the most profound secrecy upon the subject ; that if the spirit of exclusion towards strangers be destroyed in them, the line of demarcation by which they were separated from the rest of the world must be destroyed ; and, that if the secrets of their cast are unveiled, the respect which it has hitherto inspired will soon be lost and annihilated. Nothing is ever revered by the people but what is mysterious and concealed ; and this is the foundation of the sacred opinion which is en-

ertained of the Bramins : the moment they shall be known, the sentiment by which that opinion is maintained will be obliterated. This cast then, which mocks the efforts of history to trace its origin, must quickly disappear : and the genius of revolution, which has lately changed the face of Europe, would seem destined to extend his influence through the universe, to destroy opinions regarded as sacred in the most distant parts of the globe, and to unveil a secret preserved inviolable through a succession of ages too great for the calculations of our chronology to reach.

The Bramins still pursue their studies at Benares, a town which maintains its celebrity on account of the learned who live there. The nabob of this country has entirely lost his power, and is now merely the humble servant of the English company. But even were Benares to be laid low by some conquering arm, the Bramins, amidst the din of war, which they have abjured, would not abandon their studies. During all the revolutions which the Mogul Empire experienced, all the convulsions by which Bengal was distracted when invaded by mahometanism, these people, unchanged in their pursuits, their virtues, the mildness of their manners, and the secrecy of their doctrines, stedfast in the persuasion of the superiority of their morals and their descent, never failed to obtain the admiration even of their victorious enemies, who, submitting to the universal veneration which they saw paid to them, have acknowledged their own inferiority. Thus in a manner superior to the accidents of the world and the revolutions of states, they have maintained a supremacy over the minds of every nation. Without the empire gained by arms, they possess that of opinion ; and, isolated in the middle of the world, they have triumphed over time itself. And yet, with

so high a degree of glory, the result of so much patience and virtue, we must suppose they would sacrifice this to satisfy the importunate curiosity of a few travellers, totally unknown to them, who had come from the remotest regions of the earth to inquire into their mysteries; that, in direct violation of the essential precepts of their religion, they would discard, in favour of these foreigners, a silence rendered sacred by a series of ages, and reveal secrets which were the foundation of a superiority preserved and transmitted by their ancestors from the earliest periods of the world. What an instance of the instability of human affairs!

To conclude, if I have taken the liberty to hazard conjectures respecting the sacred volumes of the Bramins, let me repeat, that it is no part of my intention to raise doubts as to the authenticity of such translations as we possess. I have no proofs against them. If I had, the reputation of the authors would not deter me from saying to the world, "Do not give credit to those books; they are false." In the present case, I am so far from attempting to weaken the respect which is paid to them, that I have confined myself to reflections on the general character of the Bramins, and the inconsistency which their communications of this nature manifest: my conclusions evidently are less against the books themselves than against the cast.

The trade of Calcutta is very extensive. It is through this channel that the company obtains the saltpetre, and all the muslins which we see in Europe; while it exports to this part Spanish coins, gold thread, copper, lead, iron in bars and wrought, English manufactures of different sorts for the use of the Europeans there, wine and brandy, sea-salt, and marine stores of every kind. Individuals there obtain pepper and arrac from the coast of Malabar;

raw silks, nankeens, porcelain, and tea from China, to which place they send in return the cotton of the Malabar coast. The grain of Bengal they export to every part of India, receive silks from Surat, send muslins and European commodities to Macao and the Phillippine islands, and give circulation to all these articles in the whole interior of Asia. A commerce which extends to such a variety of branches cannot fail to enrich those who cultivate it, and accordingly Calcutta is the richest town in India. Private merchants, however, are not the most wealthy class of those who reside there; the company's servants are much richer, and become so much more rapidly.

A young man who comes from London in the capacity of writer, without a single rupee in his pocket when he arrives, finds himself in four-and-twenty hours swimming in wealth. He is no sooner landed than the sircars offer him their purses, which he is not tardy in accepting, and immediately he has his palanquin, his horses, his servants, his cooks, and every accommodation. These Bramins are well aware that the stranger will soon be in possession of a good place, and in the course of a year or two (they will wait longer if necessary) will be able to repay them liberally. They urge him to expense, knowing that the deeper he is in their debt the more tractable they shall find him. It is true, they risk the chance of his dying; but should he live they will be amply remunerated. In the course of a twelve-month the young man will be sent into the country, be invested with some office, such as assistant collector, and be intrusted with the receipt of a district. This is what the sircar was waiting for; he will follow his master in the exercise of his office, will procure without difficulty the management of the collection, and there is then no sort of extortion

which he will scruple. Whatever place the young man may obtain, the fircaar will contrive to be his agent, and to raise an immense fortune by the exactions that are in his power. But to conceal these disgraceful practices, which, if detected, might subject them to lose their cast, the Bramins pretend, that they are simply repaid, out of the salary of their master, the sums they have advanced; and this salary he resigns to them, reserving merely a sufficiency for his household expenses. This game continues till the fircaar is satisfied with the fortune he has amassed, when he takes leave of his master; or till the latter sees into the treachery of his conduct, is disgusted with it, and turns him away. The master then resorts himself to the same means, and thus completes his own fortune in two or three years; so that the people experience a change only of oppressors, without being relieved from the oppression. It should be observed, that the fircaars of whom we are speaking form but a small part of the Bramins, and that the same character must not be supposed to extend to the learned, whose virtues are equal to their talents, and who would blush, even in their retirement, at the idea, not of a fair and honest course of trade, but of any practices in the smallest degree resembling those we have described. Yet, notwithstanding the corruption and knavery of these fircaars, they are not the less unchangeably convinced of their own superiority to all other men, whom they accordingly look upon with sovereign contempt.

Of the different descriptions of persons who acquire fortunes in the service of the company, the most numerous are the military; but they arrive at opulence much more slowly, and in a degree greatly inferior to the civil officers. The habit of living in the country, the customs to which they must sub-

mit, the manners they acquire, and other circumstances, render it necessary for them to settle themselves. Such as are called by their duty to stations at a great distance in the interior part of the country, and have no opportunity of enriching themselves, ally themselves by marriage to Indian women of the Moorish cast. As the children from these alliances have often no fortune, that of their father consisting merely of his commission, which is but a precarious inheritance, they are supported in that case by the English company, which has provided for the purpose an establishment at Calcutta that is honourable to human nature, where the legitimate issue, both male and female, of any of its servants, receive a suitable education, and are taught all the useful accomplishments: the boys are afterwards provided with situations according to their abilities and genius, and the girls settled in life, and sometimes even sent to Europe at the expense of the company, to finish their education. The good order and decency of this institution have obtained it the praise of all who have attended to it. The military officers stationed at Calcutta, or in the neighbourhood, sometimes intermarry with these girls, whose fathers it frequently happens they have been acquainted with. Such marriages are by no means uncommon; all who have acquired any fortune, whether civil officers or others, finding the necessity of a female companion to banish from their minds the remembrance of their country.

From a knowledge of this general predilection in favour of matrimony in India, the English, who are inclined to every sort of speculation, send thither annually whole cargoes of females, who are tolerably handsome; and are seldom six months in the country without getting husbands. These cargoes are impatiently expected by such as, not liking the or-

phans, are tired of celibacy, and the look-out for the arrival of the ships is as eager, as it is in other places for a freight of merchandize to make purchases of goods. What is more extraordinary, these marriages are in general happy. The women, removed from Europe from a situation of mediocrity, often of unhappiness, to a distant country, where they pass suddenly into a state of opulence, feel as they ought the sentiments of gratitude due to the men, who share with them their fortunes. They become both good wives and good mothers, and are therefore generally preferred to the natives, who are continually wishing for the luxuries in which they were brought up. These matrimonial ventures afford the means of keeping up the white race at Bengal, and prevent the Portuguese cast from increasing so fast as on the coast. This cast is called here *topas*, from the word *topi*, which signifies in the Portuguese language a hat. The name is given to such Indians as change their own for the European dress, and wear a hat instead of a turban.

The children that are the offspring of the English alliances with the women of India, are of no particular religion, though most inclined to that of England. Indeed they consider themselves as English altogether, and consequently as greatly superior in blood to the Portuguese race. They are employed by the government in situations in the interior part of the country, at a distance from the capital, where they marry women of colour, and their children again become black, with an English family-name. This is true policy on the part of the company, which, conscious that a population that is foreign to it must contain the seeds of its destruction, endeavours to people the country with a race of its own. The power of the company depends for its support on a force which is not English; the com-

pany is sensible of this, but it is an evil which cannot be avoided; the hand of time can alone gradually furnish the remedy, by destroying the aversion of Europeans to marriages with women of colour. These marriages should be encouraged, as a generation would thereby be produced, which, descending from English blood, would feel towards England a national attachment.

Meanwhile, till this revolution takes place, the company is obliged to trust its safety to mercenary auxiliaries, and to put into their hands weapons, which, on the first discontent, they may turn against their masters. Fortunately for the company, the soldiers thus employed are of the Moorish cast; a cast that invaded and conquered the country shortly after the death of Mahomet, and has since entertained a perfect contempt for the natives who yielded to them, while these have retained on their part an inveterate hatred of their conquerors. The government turns this disagreement skilfully to its advantage, and endeavours to heighten it, for the purpose of governing and keeping the two parties in order, by the aid of each other. The Bramins alone would form a class, which, by having the good opinion of both, might be troublesome; but these have long forsaken their theocratical establishment, and are solely intent on extending among their own members the sciences, which they have incessantly cultivated, and the virtues by which they are distinguished.

England thus rules the country without opposition: but were the Indians and Moors to unite in a single point only, that of aversion to foreigners, her power would soon be at an end. Reduced in that case to a dependence on her European forces, the contest she would have to sustain would be too unequal for any alternative to be expected, but that of

defeat and submission. Such a catastrophe can never be brought about but by a hostile nation, possessing the necessary policy to plan the design, the patience and means to forward it in secrecy, and the power at the explosion to second and support it; and even that nation must entertain no hope of advantage to itself, since, being equally foreign, it would probably be included in the very proscription which it had contributed to foment.

If such a revolution, however, be practicable, the present government is at least doing every thing in its power to destroy the germ of it, by procuring a population of English origin, and thus diminish the possibility by augmenting its strength. Madras and Bombay command the whole of the peninsula, and the death of Tippoo has lately relieved the English from the only adequate check upon their influence. The king of Trevancour and the nizam of Golconda, in complete submission to their will, guarantee their authority from Cape Comorin to the frontier of the state of the Mahrattas, a nation that has always been their faithful ally, and assisted them with its arms. Fort William puts the whole province of Bengal at their disposal; and the nabob of the adjoining provinces, Mouxoudabad, Benares, and Lucknow, bow to the sceptre of the merchants of London. The troops of these princes are commanded by English officers, which insures their fidelity to the company; and the Mogul emperor has even offered his arms for the chains with which he will soon be loaded. Already an English detachment is stationed at Delhi, where it resides with its officer in the very palace of the emperor, and keeps guard over his person, pretending to do so for his safety, and to serve him as a guard of honour; while in fact it is a guard of spies, placed there to watch all his actions, to give an account of them,

and eventually it will not fail to reduce him to the same state of insignificance to which the other princes, his vassals, who have submitted to the ascendancy of European power, are subjected.

The English company has sovereign authority, and holds in its hands the reins of government. It nominates to all offices, imposes taxes, receives tributes, declares war and makes peace in its own name, and keeps up a land and sea force distinct from that of the king. Its navy consists of a couple of frigates, and two or three sloops, which are stationed at Bombay. The company has besides two or three merchant ships, which regularly make voyages to Europe like those which it freights; for the ships in general which the company employs in its trade do not belong to it, but are hired of private individuals. There is no privilege or exemption in this business, every one who has ships fit for the purpose being at liberty to offer them. Those which are taken up for a single voyage only are called extra-ships, to distinguish them from such as are constantly employed, and which are called regular bottoms. These vessels are commanded by captains who take an oath of fidelity to the company, and who wear a blue uniform, with black velvet facings, embroidered with gold. A command of this nature is very expensive; to obtain it, as to a regular ship, three things are necessary; the consent of the company, that of the owner of the ship, and the resignation of the individual who had the previous command. The first two require only a compliance with the established forms, but the last is an affair of purchase. A captain is not removable: to cashier him he must have committed some fault, and have been brought regularly to trial; and even then the accustomed price must be paid him by his successor, which is generally about three

thousand pounds. When a ship becomes old and unfit for service, the captain obliges the owners to build him a new one immediately, that he may be freighted in his turn. The same is done when a vessel is wrecked or taken by an enemy.

These ships are all built on nearly similar models, and should be pierced to carry at least six-and-twenty twelve-pounders on the gun-deck. Many are stronger, and in case of necessity can act offensively, and serve as frigates in the Indian seas; but their guns are too low to be of the same use in wider oceans. When the governor-general wants them for any extraordinary service, he freights them for the time necessary; this is a distinct business, and is paid for separately from their common voyage.

These resources not being sufficient, they are augmented by some land and sea forces of the king of England. A part of the royal navy is always stationed in India, that of the company serving only for the narrow seas and against the pirates of the coast of Malabar. Five or six regiments of the royal troops are in like manner kept in the different settlements: these add to the number of European forces in the pay of the company; for the king's troops in their service receive from them the same pay as their own. Besides this garrison, the king maintains a right of sovereignty over the territory of the company. The persons who reside there are amenable, as English subjects, to the tribunals of his majesty, and justice is administered in his name. All other acts of sovereignty are in the hands of the governor-general, assisted by his council; and it is from this supreme court that all orders relative to operations of government emanate. The orders from Europe, in every thing that belongs to commercial affairs, proceed from the court of directors; but points touching the sovereign government are

under the direction of a board of control, the president of which is one of the king's ministers; so that by means of this board, his troops, and the local administration of justice, the king is the true sovereign of India. The united company of merchants trading thither have only the title to flatter their vanity; the essence of the authority resides in his majesty, who allows them to dispose of their funds as they think proper, under certain restrictions however; for the opulence of this company affecting the public credit of the nation, it is necessary that its financial concerns should be subject to examination.

The government of Bengal either farms out its taxes, or puts them into some other train of management, as it thinks proper. They are collected in its name, and it appoints the judges for the interior parts of the country; a measure which is extremely obnoxious to the natives, who are thereby compelled to have recourse to foreigners for justice. In this department the greatest difficulty is to decide with equity between a European and an Indian, when the laws of the two nations differ. Each party professes himself ignorant of the laws of the other, and the judge is sure to give offence to one of them, who complains accordingly, and excites a clamour against him.

In publishing my Voyage in the Indian Ocean and to Bengal, I have been desirous of exhibiting a picture of the true state of the Europeans in that part of the world, rather than of writing a course of botany, ornithology, or mineralogy. My intention was to furnish materials for historians, not for naturalists; I shall therefore give no nomenclature either of animals, birds, or the productions of the country; on those subjects there are already writers enough. I shall merely observe with regard to

animals, that there are two sorts of oxen in India, the large and the small. The former resemble those in Europe; but there is another sort lower in stature, and which bear the same proportion to oxen in general, as the small Hungarian horses do to the large English ones. Among this small kind there are some in particular that are accounted sacred, and are called Bramin-oxen. I know not whether they are indebted for their form to the particular care that is taken of them, to a more delicate food, or to the easy life which they lead; but they have by no means the heavy sluggish air that characterises other animals of their species. On the contrary, they are light, slender, active, and have something graceful both in their shape and motions. They are a sort of *apis*, and are suffered to go at large among the people in the streets and market-places, and to take freely whatever they like. Any person in the bazar, from whom one of these oxen shall take a cabbage or other vegetable, will consider it as an instance of extraordinary good fortune, and all his family will rejoice with him at the event.

The sheep are in every respect like those in France, and do not at all resemble the African breed, which is a species that I have no where else met with in any part of the world.

Elephants are common all over this province, and are trained to every sort of employment, even to hunting the tiger. It is customary to fasten on the back of this huge animal a pavilion, large enough to hold five or six persons, who ascend to it by a ladder, which is afterwards suspended to the crupper.

When a tiger is to be hunted, the persons who engage in the amusement get into this pavilion, and have several well-trained dogs that beat the

country before them. The elephant follows the dogs till he gets scent of the tiger, which he does generally at a great distance, for his senses are extremely acute. Immediately he raises his trunk into the air like the mast of a ship, and seems anxious to keep it from being laid hold of by his enemy. On this signal the hunters prepare to fire, if it should be necessary.

The dogs in the mean time press upon the tiger, who no sooner perceives the elephant than he stands immovable, his mouth open and claws extended, roaring dreadfully, and watching every motion of the elephant with the greatest attention. The latter approaches within the length of his trunk, which he still keeps erect and out of danger: the two animals for a moment look at each other, and this is the time when the hunters usually fire. The shot makes the tiger start, on which the elephant seizes him, and dextrously lifting him up with his trunk, and letting him fall again, crushes him to death by treading upon him, and forces his entrails through the wounds. Whenever a tiger makes his appearance near any place that is inhabited, he is hunted in this manner; and the amusement is attended with so little danger, that ladies are often of the party.

There are many species of monkeys at Bengal, but no orang-outang.

Among the birds of this province are the vulture and the eagle. This last is the small or speckled eagle, but the vulture is the large sort. There is also a great variety of paroquets, and one species in particular that is difficult to be kept; a circumstance to be lamented from the extraordinary beauty of its plumage. Its head is superb, being shaded with rose colour, gold, and azure; the beak too is of rose colour, and the rest of the body

green*. There is also a charming little bird called bengali, with grey and red plumage mixed with white spots; and a large grey sparrow that can dive into the water and fetch its prey from the bottom, if the depth be not more than a foot: this is the more extraordinary, as nature does not appear to have destined this bird to swim, for it is not web-footed, and its feathers readily imbibe water.

The productions of Bengal, taken generally, may be classed under two heads, those of the soil and those of industry.

In the number of the former is saltpetre, with which the land of this country is strongly impregnated. This does not require repeated washing to yield any quantity; a single operation is sufficient to obtain as much as the Indians want. Their laziness could not endure the frequent repetitions of that process which are necessary in Europe. Cotton is another production of the soil, from which those fine muslins are made which are brought to Europe.

Wheat is very sparingly cultivated here, but the country abounds in rice, which constitutes the principal nourishment of the people: the ground is uncommonly fruitful; there is no such thing known as a bad crop. As the country is low and flat, it is intersected and watered by a multitude of canals, which are supplied by the Ganges, and contribute greatly to the fertility of the soil. This river overflows in the higher countries, and leaves, like the Nile, a sediment behind it, which the heat of the sun modifies and renders very productive. Bengal is the granary of rice to all India.

Vegetables of every sort thrive well, but fruit in

* The name given to this bird by Edwards is the *rose-headed ring paroquet*. T.

general is good for nothing. With much pains some European fruit-trees are made to grow, but the fig is the only fruit that prospers, and even that is scarce. As to the fruits of the torrid zone, the latitude of the climate is too high, and the heat too moderate, to bring them to any perfection; the anana in particular is very bad.

The English have introduced into this province a new species of agriculture, in the cultivation of the sugar-cane. When I left Bengal in 1794, this undertaking had just begun to be tried, and it already afforded a fair prospect of success. Messrs. Lambert and Ross were the first who engaged in the speculation. I visited their plantation, and had the pleasure of seeing that their fields looked well, were in good order, and the canes promising, though smaller than those of the Antilles; this disadvantage however is compensated by the quantity of juice they yield, which is owing to the peculiar quality of the soil in which they are planted. The only thing that dissatisfied me was, that a misplaced economy seemed to have presided in the establishment of the manufactories. The buildings were good, the coppers extensive, and the mill well executed, but it was worked by oxen, which have neither the strength nor the perseverance of the mules in the West Indies. These oxen are a degenerate kind of buffalo, and it is not without great trouble they can be rendered in any degree useful: the business of driving and whipping them is the hardest employment in the whole manufactory. This mode of working a mill appears to me a very ineligible contrivance; a water-mill certainly would be much more simple and preferable, and the Ganges is rapid enough to afford a fall of water that would set any wheel in motion.

At the period of which I speak, the natives were

too little acquainted with a business of this kind to be capable of conducting it, and workmen were accordingly brought from China for the purpose: it is to be hoped however, that the Indians will learn in time to do without these men, and will no longer have recourse to foreigners, who are not to be obtained but at an expense that enhances the price of the sugar, which will prove of little ultimate advantage, unless it can be brought in price to bear some proportion in Europe to that of the West Indies.

In some provinces indigo is cultivated with considerable success; but though the plants are fine, all the indigo I saw was of a very indifferent quality. This is owing perhaps to the manner of preparation; however, be the cause what it may, certainly that of the Isle of France is greatly superior. I saw at Calcutta the common blue indigo only, but none of the copper, or the flower, or the inflammable sort.

Among the productions of industry, ought principally to be mentioned the different kinds of muslins, some plain, others striped, and others again worked with gold, silver, and cotton, of which the finest are made at Dacca, a town in the northern part of the province, where there are many manufactories; to these must be added the doreas and terrindams, the different sorts of linen under the names of coffacs, nainsooks, gurrahs, ballafores, the chintzes of Patna, the carpets of Barampour, handkerchiefs and pieces of silk and of cotton.

The English have established manufactories for printed linens in the neighbourhood of Calcutta, that in no long time will totally ruin those manufactured by the natives of Patna, which are greatly inferior, and are besides less easily disposed of, on account of the distance of Patna from the capital.

At Sirampoor, a Danish colony, of which I shall speak hereafter, there was an excellent manufactory of this kind, belonging to Mr. Hamilton.

The Ganges, dispensing fertility in its progress, navigable throughout, and thus affording the means of commercial intercourse, has obtained the adoration of the inhabitants of its banks, from the innumerable benefits it continually bestows upon them, and has been worshipped as a divinity since the period when, according to tradition, madam Dourga plunged into it and disappeared. They relate, that this woman was their legislator, that in her old age she descended to the bottom of the Ganges, and that she still lives there. Accordingly the greatest happiness of life is that of bathing in this river and drinking its waters, which have the virtue of purifying both body and soul.

Amidst the absurdities of this story, the wisdom of the legislator may be clearly perceived, who intended by the invention to enforce upon the natives the practice of frequent bathing, so necessary in a climate like this, to prevent cutaneous disorders and the various evils resulting from uncleanness. It is in the same spirit that they are enjoined by a precept to abstain from animal food, and to live wholly upon vegetable diet; a precaution equally useful for the prevention of those putrid disorders, which would otherwise be inevitable, from the noisome vapours that prevail in a country almost wholly under water during a part of the year.

The story of madam Dourga has given rise to a superstition, to which many a poor creature has fallen a victim. It is believed that every one who is drowned in the Ganges is destined to enjoy with this fair personage eternal happiness, and that it is by her contrivance and interposition that accidents of this kind happen. When a man therefore is in

danger of drowning, instead of endeavouring to extricate him, the bystanders wish him every kind of pleasure, recommend themselves to his favour, and even, if necessary, forward the catastrophe, or at least are afraid of incurring the displeasure of their fair divinity by assisting him to get into a boat or reach the shore.

It is seldom, however, that they have occasion to carry so far their inhuman zeal towards any of their countrymen; for a native, who should fall into the water, persuading himself that he is going to the abode of eternal felicity, has no desire to escape from it by any exertions to save his life. It sometimes happens, that, in spite of themselves, the tide will drift them ashore; in this case they suppose the soul not deemed by madam Dourgā sufficiently pure to be admitted into her presence. The Europeans, however, who are little ambitious of the honour of visiting this lady, when by accident they fall into the river, endeavour to save themselves; and it is well they do, for the natives, exerting all their speed, fly instantly from the spot; and if the unfortunate being is unable to swim, it is all over with him; he can expect no assistance unless one of his countrymen should chance to be at hand.

The Indians bathe at least once a day, as the precept commands them. I have passed whole days in looking at them; men, women, and children bathe together without the smallest indecency. They leave their shoes on the bank, and sprinkle themselves as they go into the river; when they are up to the middle in water, they take off their apron (*pagne*) and wash it, perform the ablutions directed by their religion, put on their apron again, and come out. Often some Bramins come to bathe, bringing with them a small brass vessel of the shape of a censer, in which are some grains about the size

of a pea : these they throw one at a time into the river, uttering, in a low tone of voice, a prayer or two. They then sprinkle themselves slightly on the back, touch their temples with the first joint of their thumb, wash their apron, and retire. It is to be remarked that the ceremony of washing the apron is observed by every individual ; a proof that the precept was given for the purpose of cleanliness.

As to the ceremonies of the Bramins, such as throwing the grain into the river, the practice of enchantment to prevent the tigers from destroying the natives, the worship of madam Dourga, and other absurdities, these are points which we must not too hastily condemn. They are seemingly necessary to maintain among the people the prevailing superstition, while the more learned of the Bramins are superior to such mummery, and arrive, both in morals and mathematics, to the highest attainments. Besides, where is the religion that does not include some form, purposely contrived to impose on the multitude ? Even we, who are happily instructed in the purest of all *, have we not our holy water, which is consecrated by breathing upon it and throwing in salt ? Yet would it not be unjust to form an opinion of the religion itself from this instance of its practice ? This, however, is the side on which it is attacked by those who would destroy it ; and perhaps the natives of Bengal, at some future time, might employ the same means to overturn theirs, by ridiculing its forms, without attending to its substance, were not instruction wholly confined to the cast of the Bramins, and the rest of the nation in such deplorable ignorance as to be incapable of reflecting upon the reasonableness or absurdity of what they are directed to believe.

* The author being a Frenchman, was consequently a catholic. T.

It frequently happens, that the aged, when at the point of death, cause themselves to be brought to the edge of the river at the time of low water, and, being covered over with the mud by their friends, are left in this state to be overwhelmed by the tide when it returns, to the great edification of the people, who are persuaded, that they are about to be received into the mansions of the blessed.

Besides the ceremony of bathing, the Indians pay a regular worship to the Ganges. They make offerings to it of oil, cocoa, and flowers, which they expose on its banks, to be washed away by the stream. When they have a friend at sea, and would offer vows for his return, they light in the evening some small lamps, filled with oil of cocoa, and placing them in earthen dishes, which they adorn with garlands, they commit them in the same manner to the stream: the river is sometimes covered with these lights. If the dish sinks speedily, it is a bad omen for the object of their vows; but they abandon themselves to the most pleasing hopes, if they can observe their lamp shining at a distance, and if it goes so far as to be at length out of sight without any accident happening to extinguish it, it is a sure token, that their friend will return in safety.

This madam Dourga, who has deified the Ganges, is held in great veneration: her festival is celebrated every year in the month of October, and while it lasts nothing is known but rejoicing; the natives visit each other, and on three successive evenings assemble together for the adoration of their divinity. Her statue is placed in a small niche of clay, which is gilt and adorned with flowers, pieces of tinsel, and other similar ornaments. The statue itself is dressed in the most magnificent attire they can procure, is about a foot high, and the niche

with its appendages about three feet and half. All the rich celebrate a festival of this kind in their own houses, and are ambitious of displaying the greatest luxury, lighting up their apartments in the most splendid manner. Such as cannot afford to observe this solemnity at their own house, go to that of some neighbour : there is one of these celebrations at least in every quarter of the town, so that all the inhabitants have an opportunity of paying their devotions.

The room is furnished with seats for the guests, and the statue is placed on a small stage concealed by a curtain, as in our public theatres. The curtain being drawn up by the servants, a concert begins, in which the principal instrument is a sort of bag-pipe. The reed of this not being flexible, and the performer being wholly ignorant how to modulate its tone, nothing can be less musical than the sound it produces, unless it be the tunes that are played upon it : the most vile and discordant clarionet is melody itself compared with this instrument, which would literally split the ears of any other audience. In the midst of this concert the pantomime is introduced, in which the personages of the scene, uncouthly dressed, and insupportably disgusting, from the rancid odour of the oil of cocoa, exhibit some ridiculous tricks, calculated to amuse the honest Indians, who laugh heartily and give themselves up to the most extravagant joy. For two days every kind of respect and adoration is paid to the idol ; but on the third appearances alter. They abuse it, call it a whore, show their posteriors to it, and load it with curses and execrations : this done, they take it upon their shoulders and carry it to the banks of the Ganges, followed by the horrid din of the bag-pipe, where, reiterating their curses, they throw it

into the water, amidst the most frightful cries and howling, and leave it to its fate*.

It is not easy to discover the drift of this ceremony. The Bramin, who was my sircar, told me, that the festival of madam Dourga was instituted to perpetuate and honour her memory, retain the people in a devotion, which had for its object to give a character of sacredness to the Ganges, and thus enforce the precept, which enjoined the salutary practices of frequent ablution and bathing: but this lady not being the supreme deity, it was not amiss, he added, to conclude the ceremony with acts of insult, which would convince the people, that Brama alone was entitled to the unmixed and never-ceasing adoration of mankind. This explanation, though by no means satisfactory, was all the light I could obtain on so singular a practice. This is the only worship I ever knew that passed in its ceremonies from adoration to contempt and insult.

The Moors celebrate also an annual festival, which they call *Jamshey*. I did not obtain any accurate information as to the nature of this ceremony, but it appeared to me to be of the mournful kind. A sort of funeral exhibition is carried through the streets, accompanied with banners resembling standards. There was a great concourse of people, and every individual had a stick in his hand, with a small flag at the end of it. They walked in ranks on the different sides of the street with great regularity. In the middle of the procession were some who performed feats of strength, and showed their activity by the most hazardous leaps, bawling out all the time as loud as they were able. As neither the period of this festival, nor that of madam Dourga, is

* There are further details of this festival in Stavorinus, of which some are so humiliating to man, as to startle our belief. See his *Voyages*, translated by S. H. Wilcocke, Vol. I. page 412. T.

determined by astronomical returns, they vary, and sometimes happen together : in that case, the government is obliged to use the utmost vigilance and precaution, to prevent the most serious accidents. Whenever the processions meet, neither of them will give way to the other, and the ancient enmity of the two casts revives in all its rancour : the parties attack each other like furies ; the remembrance of the ancient victories of the Mahometans rouses a courage and inspires a confidence on one side, which on the part of the Indians are equally supplied by enthusiasm, and they both fight with the most inveterate malice. Jamsey and madam Dourga are broken to pieces in the confusion, while their followers murder one another on their remains, and the battle is only terminated by the destruction or rout of one of the parties. A spirit of revenge produces a repetition of these battles on the following days, and it is impossible to foresee the length to which the massacres will extend, if the government does not possess an armed force sufficient to restrain the combatants.

The inhuman custom of women burning themselves to death on the corpse of their husbands is not yet annihilated in India ; but it is confined to the cast of the Bramins. When an individual of this cast dies, one of his wives is bound to exhibit this dreadful proof of her affection. This lamentable sacrifice is not imposed upon them by law, for they may refuse to make it ; but in that case they lose their character, are held in dishonour, and are deprived of their cast, a misfortune so intolerable, that they prefer to it the alternative of being burnt alive. Nature however revolts in some of these widows, and it is probable, if left to themselves, that they would never consent to so cruel a sacrifice ; but the old women and priests are incessantly impor-

tuning them, and representing, that after death the most exquisite happiness is their lot: as they are commonly young, it is no difficult matter to triumph over their weakness and irresolution; they accordingly submit to the custom, and the prejudice which ordains it keeps its ground.

The manner in which this sacrifice is performed is different in different places. As practised at Bengal it is horrible. The funeral pile of the husband is erected near a wall, with just space enough between for a single person to pass, that the widow may walk, as is the custom, three times round it. A hole is made in the wall at the height of the pile, in which a beam, upwards of twenty feet long is placed, with a rope fastened to the end of it, and hanging to the ground, for the purpose of making it osculate.

When the widow has performed her ambulations, and taken off her jewels, which she distributes among her companions, she ascends the pile, and lies down, embracing the corpse of her husband. The beam is then put into motion, and falls upon her so heavily as to break her loins, or deprive her at least of the power of moving. the pile is now set on fire, and the music striking up, contributes, with the shouts of the people, to drown the noise of her groans, and she is thus, in the full sense of the expression, burnt alive.

My servant, a very brave fellow, who had been discharged from the military service for the loss of a finger, and who disliked the Bramins, informed me one day, that a woman was going to be burnt at a place which he pointed out to me, on the left side of the river, between Fulta and Mayapour. Having enquired into the circumstance, I learned, that she was both young and handsome, that she had already twice put off the ceremony, but that the day

being a third time fixed, nothing could longer defer it. I conceived, that a woman who had twice hesitated, would find at least no great pleasure in submitting, and conjecturing, that she might not be sorry to escape altogether, I formed the resolution of endeavouring to save her. I asked my man if he would assist me, which he readily agreed to, adding, that he had told it me with the hope of engaging me in the enterprize. He requested that one of his comrades might be of the party, who was a bold fellow and would be of great use to me; I commended his zeal, and accepted the proffered services of his friend.

I took with me twenty good European sailors, whom I put on board my sloop, in the bow of which I mounted a swivel: I provided also a dozen musquets, eight pistols, and a score of sabres. Two officers accompanied me, who were resolved to aid me to the utmost of their power. I encouraged the sailors by promising them the sixth part of the value of whatever jewels the woman should have about her, intending to leave the remainder for herself, if she did not choose to stay with me. My servant and his companion were without arms, as it was not my intention to employ them in fighting. I disposed my forces into three bodies, in the following manner. One of the officers and eight men were to guard the boat. The other officer and six men were to follow me at a short distance with pistols, but to reserve their fire till I gave orders. Six of the most resolute I selected to attend me in the business; four of them armed with musquets, and two, who were to keep themselves close at my side, with pistols. The party who were left to guard the boat had musquets, and were to be in readiness to cover my retreat: besides his fire arms, every man had a sabre, and no one was to fire without express leave.

Such was the arrangement of my force, and I had no doubt from the valour of my people, that my intentions would be admirably seconded. They had all seen some service, and would bravely stand before a veteran and experienced enemy, much more before men like the natives of this country. It was planned by my servant and his companion, that I should go up to the widow and touch her: this was a violation that would deprive her of her cast, and she would then have no right to burn herself: at the same time they were to tell her in the Moorish language, not to be frightened, but resign herself wholly to their direction, for that they came to rescue her. They were then to carry her off as expeditiously as possible, under the escort of the officer and party following me, while I and my six chosen sailors were to bear the brunt of the contest, that they might have time to reach the boat, to which I was to retreat when I supposed them safely arrived there.

I hoped, that men, unarmed and thus taken by surprise, seeing a body of Europeans with sabres and pistols, would not have the courage to attack us; but, being prepared to receive them if they did, I resolved to run the risk.

My intention was to leave the woman afterwards to her own disposal, that is to say, to give her the choice of either going with me, or of settling at Calcutta upon the produce of her jewels, which I should of course have the precaution to bring away with her.

My whole plan was prepared and ready, and I set out to execute it. I arrived at the place, and alertly jumped ashore. The arrangements agreed upon were made with precision. I advanced, and was astonished at the stillness and silence that prevailed. I came to the spot. Alas! the dreadful

sacrifice had been completed the preceding evening. I had been misinformed of the day. The wall was still warm, and the ashes were smoking. I returned with an oppression of heart that I can hardly express, and as much affected as if I had been a witness to the barbarous execution. My regret for this woman was as great as the pleasure I should have felt in saving her, and the idea I had formed of her youth and beauty.

It is to be wished, for the progress of our knowledge in the history of the globe, that the books of the Bramins, since it appears that we know something of them, would instruct us as to the time when these people first made their appearance in Bengal; a province which at that period must have been one vast marsh, and which without doubt they drained by digging the Ganges, and other great canals, that serve to draw off the water, which would otherwise cover the whole face of the country. Such an epoch, if it could be ascertained, together with the little elevation of the soil in this province, would form a basis from which inferences might be drawn relative to the retreat of the ocean.

Till these lights shall be afforded us, we must suppose the province of Bengal to be of no remote antiquity. It is a vast plain, without a single mountain of granite; the little hills which are met with are merely hardened clay; and, except towards the northern extremity, not a stone, even of a calcareous description, is to be found.

If we were assured by tradition, that the race of the Bramins are the true aborigines of the country, and that it has been inhabited from periods more remote than our chronology can trace, this fact would overthrow the system, not of the absolute retreat of the sea, but of its gradual and progressive retreat; for there are proofs so strong on the most

elevated parts of the globe of such elevations having been formerly covered by the water, that it is impossible to resist their evidence. Accordingly Bengal, at some period or other, must have been in the same situation. This being admitted, the principles of hydrostatics will make it impossible to suppose this province to have been cleared of its waters prior to places of a more elevated position. If we consider its trifling height, when compared with the Alps, the Pyrenees, the Gaults, and lastly the mountains of Thibet, which seem to rise proudly above it, we must suppose it to be a country in its infancy. The coast of Bengal is so low, that it cannot be seen at the distance of three leagues; a heavy sea would overflow it; and when the tide is unusually high, at the sizygies, the banks of the Ganges are under water. If I may offer the result of my own observations, Bengal is of the same age as the plain of India, which extends from the coast as far as the Gaults, or perhaps a little more modern. This land is all on nearly the same level, and must consequently have been left by the ocean at nearly the same period.

If mountains of granite be the primitive matter which constituted our planet when it first began to contract its solidity, we may say with Pallas, wherever we meet with it: "this is one of the points most distant from the centre of the earth, for it is composed of a substance, which, formerly expansive in its fluid state, was projected by a centrifugal power." This substance therefore must be the most ancient of those which enter in its present state into the composition of the consolidated globe; since, at the period of the conflagration, it was the first that, condensing itself, yielded to the expansive force, which threw it from the centre to the surface. When I find myself therefore on a portion

of the globe that has none of these appearances, I must conclude myself to be on a land of modern formation. If we descend from the summit of these mountains of granite or primitive matter to the plain of Bengal, which is scarcely above the level of the ocean, is subject to inundations, and does not afford a single specimen of any of the original substances of the globe, even those of a calcareous nature, which are evidently produced in the bosom of the sea, we shall be obliged to admit, that this low plain is nothing but the sands which the sea has quitted, and must be a country of very late date, when considered in relation to the past existence of the globe.

Indeed no part of this country bears any genuine stamp of antiquity. I do not call such the monuments of human construction, which are swept away in the lapse of ages : I refer to characters imprinted upon those vast masses, raised by nature alone, and which the influence of time is insensibly changing. But where are we to look for vestiges like these in a plain, as yet scarcely solid, and that can in no part be dug without meeting the water, which lately covered, and has but just left its surface ? The extraordinary fertility of this country evinces it to be of modern formation, and the retreat of the ocean is marked by irrefragable proofs. The Clive-islands have evidently been formed by the sea ; the sand-banks called *Brasses* experience a slow but regular conformation, and will hereafter be converted into islands, when the Clive-islands will be joined to the continent. The bank called *Seareef* is a new bank, which the sea is adding to the others. Even the Ganges diminishes in depth ; a circumstance that is not produced by the elevation of its bottom, for the violence of the current effectually prevents it, but by the water re-

tiring to a lower level. When the French company was first established in this country, ships of war of seventy-four guns came to Chandernagore; but afterwards they were obliged to stop at Mayapour, and at present can reach no further than Cadjery, a small village at the mouth of the river.

The conclusion I would draw from these arguments is, that the Bramins are not sprung from Bengal, but have an origin much more ancient than the existence of that country. An old oral tradition affirms them to have come from the north: this tradition is accompanied with no proof, and corroborated by no authority, but is a presumption, notwithstanding, that gives weight to my conjecture.

It has been supposed, that the Ezourvedam, of which we have a translation, was composed a short time prior to the conquests of Alexander. I dare affirm, that this book was never written at Bengal; and should be bold enough, but for the respect I bear to his memory, to doubt the assertions of a celebrated author*, who has said, that it was in the neighbourhood of the Ganges that mankind first assembled in society. He scruples not to allege as a proof of it, the extraordinary fertility of the country, which he supposes might determine its first inhabitants to settle there. But if its fertility in the early ages of the world had been so great, it is certain that it would long since have been exhausted, and the whole country at present be as destitute as the mountains, which were in like manner fertile heretofore, and served for the subsistence of the first race of men whom the ocean confined to their summits, that are now barren and naked.

The situation of Calcutta is such, that those who are in possession of it are masters of the whole river, to the prejudice of the other nations of Europe,

* Voltaire: *Essai sur les Moeurs, &c.*

whose settlements are all higher up in its course. Accordingly, were France to augment her military works at Chandernagore, so as even to render that fortress impregnable, she would find herself notwithstanding, from the first moment of hostilities, completely cut off from communication with the sea by the guns of Fort William, the fire of which crosses the river and commands the passage. As Chandernagore would thus be deprived of every kind of succour, it must fall, if its garrison were only able to act within the walls.

A little above Calcutta, on the same side of the river, is a small town called Bernagore, which belonged formerly to the Dutch, but was exchanged in the year 1790, and now forms a part of the English territory. It is celebrated only in the annals of debauchery.

From this place the European establishments upwards are on the left bank of the river. The first is Sirampour, or Fredericnagore, a handsome Danish colony, situated on a healthy spot of ground, and which wants only a greater share of commerce and opulence to render it a very agreeable residence. The inhabitants are fond of pleasure, and the governor, lieutenant colonel Obie, with whom I was acquainted, attracted to the town, by the politeness of his behaviour, and the entertainments he gave, a great many strangers. One of his daughters, who was married to count Shafaleski, gave an air of gaiety to the place: her assemblies were crowded; all descriptions of foreigners were admitted to them; there was dancing, and no one sought amusement in vain.

This little town is merely a factory, subject to the council of Trinquebar: it furnishes a few bales of goods to a couple of vessels belonging to the Danish company, which come for them annually. It supplies also one or two private vessels, which the

privilege of the company does not exclude from this market. The commerce of the place is consequently very confined. Sirampour is almost wholly inhabited by emigrants from the other establishments, who fly thither as to an asylum under their misfortunes. The settlement belongs to the king, who keeps there a company of Sepoys, as a sort of police. There is nothing worthy of attention in the town except the house of the governor. It is striking however by its elevation above the river, which renders it pleasant and healthy, and it has every where a clean and prepossessing appearance.

Opposite to this town, on the other bank of the river, the English company has a camp of ten thousand men, that furnishes Fort William with its garrison, which is relieved every month.

Proceeding upwards, we find on the same bank the palace of Garati, a solitary remnant of ancient French grandeur, and which shows the scale on which the original plans of that people in Asia were projected. It is the finest building in India. The front towards the garden is in the taste which the Europeans have adopted in this part of the world, being ornamented with a peristyle of the Ionic order, after the Grecian manner. The inside of the palace is splendid, the hall spacious, and the ceiling and cornice are painted by the hand of a master. The front towards the court is entirely in the French taste, with no peristyle. It represents three buildings, each adorned with a pediment, in which are the cartouches for bas-reliefs, which have not been executed. The court is circular, and in a good taste, and the entrance is by an avenue, that opens majestically upon this beautiful edifice. Garati is the common residence of the French governor in Bengal. It has frequently fallen into the hands of the English, who have not always resigned it.

with a good grace, when the return of peace has brought back its right owners. It has always however, sooner or later, been restored on such occasions to the party who were in possession before the commencement of hostilities.

A little higher, on the same side, is the small town of Chandernagore, the citadel of which is now only a heap of ruins. The houses, some half demolished, and the best in a state of decay, the streets dull and overgrown with grass, the air of neglect which every where appears along the walls, the breaches in some that are mouldering away, are so many tokens of the decline of the French power in Bengal. Yet formerly, under the government of Dupleix, this town was flourishing and opulent. The French, powerful and beloved, had the credit of rescuing the English when besieged at Cadjery, where they had been obliged to shelter themselves on escaping from Calcutta. Scarcely however were they thus restored to liberty, than, a reinforcement arriving from Europe, with intelligence at the same time of a declaration of war, they marched to Chandernagore, to attack the very men, who, two months before, had saved them from the fate of their companions, suffocated in the black hole at Calcutta, and to lay in ruins a citadel, of which the defenders, by a generous interference, had prevented their total expulsion from the country. The barbarian meanwhile, who put to death so many of their unfortunate countrymen, to whose memory a monument has been erected near the old fort at Calcutta, set them an example of true magnanimity, by letting the English fortrefs stand, after he had taken it, and even consenting to restore it. The French on the contrary had nothing restored to them by the English but ruins, which their ill destiny has not permitted them to repair. From that period,

Chandernagore has continually languished, and now offers to the eye a mere scene of desolation. The town has a convent of monks, and a regular church provided with a minister, but they are both very poor establishments. Previous to the French revolution, the vessels of that nation were used in considerable numbers to anchor at this place, which gave it a degree of animation; but the appearance of the first sparks of that political conflagration drove the French from the town, and their sircars followed them: the only two houses of any considerable trade which they had there escaped, one to Calcutta, and the other to Sirampour. The agent of the French company, abandoning the whole of his stores, also took refuge among the English, leaving Chandernagore without commerce, without money, and without employment.

The inhabitants of this small colony were still numerous, consisting chiefly of the crews of vessels, most of whom were deserters. Such of the white inhabitants as were not disaffected consisted of a dozen families, who had places under the government, and about two hundred aged seamen. A few revolutionary individuals contriving to enflame the minds of these last, a man, whom fortune had elevated to the station of advocate to the king, distinguished himself on this occasion, and was particularly active. A small colony like this could have no revolution to effect, and had only to wait for directions from the mother-country and obey them. The alterations rendered necessary by the new order of things might have been made without disturbance or convulsion; but it did not so happen. Revolutionary proceedings were carried so far, that the governor, M. de M***, saw his authority despised, and was obliged to leave the place, and retire to Garati. The well-disposed inhabitants, who were

leading families in the colony, followed him, thinking themselves in danger amidst two hundred madmen, led on by an individual equally artful and vehement, and whose least threat was that of throwing into the river whoever should render himself obnoxious to his party.

The governor, unfortunately, and the commanding-officer of the two companies of Sepoys which composed the garrison, being on ill terms, did not on this occasion act in concert. The former, in consequence of this misunderstanding, not expecting to find the obedience necessary in a time of insurrection, and conceiving the armed force which should support his authority to be at variance with him, departed, in order to provide for his own safety.

The officer, however, seeing the governor, his chief, quit the place, forgot the disagreement that had prevailed between them, and, thinking himself bound to follow with the troops, retired also to Garati. The governor might easily have perceived, that by such a proceeding the officer had no idea of enmity; and, accordingly, had he marched instantly back, attended by the two companies, he might have entered the town in all his authority, and have restored and maintained order, till he should have received instructions from Europe; but instead of taking any vigorous steps of this nature, he contented himself with making preparations for his defence, in case of attack. For this purpose, he procured two pieces of cannon, which he planted in the avenue, and encamped his troops at the gate of the palace. Lord Cornwallis made him an offer of a sufficient force to reduce Chandernagore; but M. de M***, in the true spirit of a Frenchman, declined accepting it, wishing to owe no obligation of this sort to the natural enemies of his country.

He feared the Greeks even when offering presents
—*Danaos et dona ferentes.*

Two days after, the Portuguese cast, forming a company among themselves, called *topas*, also repaired to the governor, who thus saw himself at the head of the loyal and most numerous part of the colony, in opposition to a handful of malecontents, who were besides in insurrection without a cause ; for no official intelligence had yet been received, and the governor was actually waiting for instructions from France. In this situation he refused to take any measure against the rebels, and remained in a state of inaction in his palace.

The revolutionists meanwhile were not tranquil spectators of this conduct on the part of the governor. Their first attention was directed to what has been called the sinews of war, and with this view they seized upon those sircars who had not had the precaution to make their escape, and exacted from them heavy contributions. These sums they applied to the raising a body of three hundred Sépoys, which they recruited from the country around. A merchant, whose affairs were desperate, thinking thereby to retrieve himself, accepted the command : he was sure at least of subsistence for a time, and in reality this was all he obtained. A young officer of a trading vessel was lieutenant under him. By plundering the company's magazines, they obtained clothing for this corps, and a quantity of Madeira wine, of which they drank a part, and sold the rest to furnish their treasury. They purchased some indifferent pieces of cannon, that had belonged to a merchant ship, and put themselves into a posture of defence. Finding that no one molested them, they suspected some snare, to guard against which they threw up some small entrenchments on the bank of the river, behind which they posted themselves, with

the king's magazine in their rear, fortifying the whole with their paltry artillery. They called this their camp, and at night all their party were bound to repair to it. In the morning their leader harangued them, and they were dismissed till the afternoon, when they returned to their exercise. By the inactivity of the governor the storm was suffered to thicken, and the strength of the insurgents gradually increased, till, accustomed to insurrection, they at length grew so familiar with it, that instead of considering themselves as criminal, the governor alone appeared so in their eyes. Meanwhile, five hundred men, united in an enterprise of sedition, were not a body to be despised, and M. de M*** was wholly unpardonable in allowing them to remain in this state of security.

Affairs were in this posture, when intelligence arrived, that the people of Paris had gone to Versailles for the king, and brought him to the capital, where they had determined he should reside. Upon this, the ci-devant advocate, and a surgeon, who had joined his party, exclaimed, that the inhabitants of the other part of the globe had set them an example, which it became them to follow, and that Paris and Chandernagore should have but one rule of conduct. They resolved therefore to march to Garati, and bring back the governor. This advice inflaming their minds, and some arrack they had drunk having mounted into their heads, it was necessary to set out immediately, to quiet the clamours of the multitude. It was in the power of M. de M***, either to resist them with success, or to secure himself by flight: he however did neither, but suffered himself to be taken, without firing a shot, and to be brought as a prisoner into the town, where he ought to command. On his arrival, he was shut up in a dungeon, with all the officers of the garr-

son. With respect to the private individuals who had accompanied him in his retreat, they escaped to Sirampour, where they contemplated at a distance the first scenes of a tragedy, which happily terminated with a catastrophe less sanguinary than there was reason to apprehend.

As soon as lord Cornwallis was informed of these proceedings, he invested Chandernagore, and demanded that the governor should be given up. The insurgents had at least the quality of courage: they accordingly appeared at the barrier of their little camp with the matches lighted; and the president of their committee declared to the English officer, that on the first shot fired against them they would put their prisoners to death and would never surrender while they had a man left to defend their entrenchments. The officer, who had not expected an answer of this kind, retired, and other means were resorted to for the deliverance of the captives.

The trial of the governor and his companions now commenced. The whole of this process was a striking example of mental dereliction and passion. It was necessary at length to pass sentence, which was the point most embarrassing of all. They would willingly have condemned the supposed culprits to death; but the French had not the power to carry a sentence like this into execution in Bengal without the approbation of the neighbouring nabob, whom they did not wish to offend. Influenced by this consideration, they determined to send them in chains to the isle of France, whence it was hoped they would speedily be conveyed to Europe, with a character that would conduct them at once from the vessel to the scaffold. This was during the reign of Robespierre.

The pilot-brig, which they had in their possession, was equipped for this expedition, and the prisoners

were put on board. This was precisely the moment lord Cornwallis waited for: he accordingly sent three armed brigs to chase the French brig, and bring it into Calcutta. The vessels at anchor in Port Diamond had also orders to intercept it in its passage.

In consequence of these measures, the governor and his companions in captivity obtained their release, and were brought in honour to the English settlements, where they remained for a considerable time. The inhabitants of Chandernagore continued in the same state of confusion: some commissioners sent from Pondicherry for the purpose of re-establishing order and tranquillity being unable to effect it, lord Cornwallis left them to the consequences of their internal dissensions, till war was declared between the two nations, when he took possession of the place and dispersed them.

About a league above Chandernagore is the little town of Chinsura, the chief of the Dutch settlements in Bengal. This place has been long condemned to inactivity, and offers nothing worthy of observation. Its exports do not exceed, at most, two cargoes a year, which are sent in boats to Fulta, where the ships stop. Here, as in all the Dutch establishments, some Malay families have settled, and given birth to a description of women called *mosses*, who are in high estimation for their beauty and talents. The race is now almost extinct, or is scattered through different parts of the country; for Chinsura, in its decline, had no longer sufficient attraction to retain them, and at present a few only, and those with great difficulty, are here and there to be found.

On the same side of the river, at some distance above this colony, is Bandel, a small Portuguese town, in a still worse condition than Chinsura, and

which would scarcely have preserved even its name, but for the excellence of the cheese that is made there, and which is held in such request through the country, that it keeps up the remembrance of the town from which it is derived.

After staying three months at Calcutta, I sold my vessel for a hundred thousand livres, and was happy at being relieved from the uneasiness I had continually felt respecting it, and the injury it was daily sustaining. I thought now of returning to the Isle of France, when an aid-de-camp of Mr. Conway arrived at Calcutta with a vessel, which he had purchased on credit, and did not well know what to do with. I was nearly in the same predicament with regard to my money, and was desirous of speculating in the article of grain, by making a venture to the coast of Malabar, then afflicted by a most dreadful famine. With this view I hired his vessel, which I freighted with three hundred tons of rice. A few days after I had concluded this bargain, he discharged the captain, and not readily meeting with another to suit him, he asked me to take the command of her myself. "If I engage a person in the ordinary way," said he, "he will deceive me like the one I have dismissed. If I select one in whom I can confide, I must do it at a very great expense, which I cannot afford. Take therefore yourself the command of the ship; you must go for the purpose of disposing of your cargo, and it can make little difference whether you go as captain or passenger." I consented, and began to prepare for my voyage. The first step I took was to discharge all the Lascars. The blacks in the crew of my own vessel had tired me of this sort of

sailors. I composed my crew of different Europeans, taking great care, however, to avoid such of the French as had lately arrived, for fear of disobedience or mutiny. I was fortunate enough to collect an excellent crew of thirty men, who proved of great service to me in situations which required resolution and fortitude. I know not why I should reason with myself against adopting the notion, certainly superstitious, that some ships are lucky, and others unlucky: this of mine was of the latter description. We changed its name, which was Cook, to that of the United Friends, and we embarked together to realize its new appellation. From the moment I ordered a man to the capstan, to that of my arriving at the Isle of France, I experienced every imaginable vexation: in short, this vessel ruined me.

On the day fixed for our departure we could not weigh the anchor; it was buried so deep, that all our efforts were ineffectual. My friend was averse to the idea of losing it; but in the chapter of anchors I was more deeply read than he was. I had lost seven in my former vessel; namely five at Calcutta, one at Pondicherry, and one at the Sechelles. At last I prevailed on him to go ashore and purchase another; and this done, I cut the cable. I proceeded down the river with a Dutch pilot, who had the reputation of being skilful, and who gave us a proof of it, by running us upon a sand-bank opposite Fulta. We drifted with the tide, dragging an anchor, but with so little resistance as not to lose the power of managing the helm. The vessel striking abaft was thrown instantly athwart, but fortunately being flat-built, she did not quite capsize, though the heel was dreadful. It was then I had reason to rejoice at having a crew of Europeans. The boats of the country, that were helping

us down the river, immediately rowed away, and, believing that we must inevitably perish, faithful to their religion, left us to the care of madam Dourga. That fair divinity, however, probably did not conceive us sufficiently pure to be admitted into her presence, and we escaped for this time the honour of drowning.

My pilot was so confused as to be incapable of acting, and, as he ceased to give orders, I took upon myself the management of the ship. I began by raising the anchor, upon which I was afraid, when the tide should return, of being drifted. I then placed an officer in every boat, with a brace of pistols, and gave orders for the first man to be shot through the head, who endeavoured to escape without my permission. I was preparing to shore up my vessel by the help of some top-masts till the coming-in of the flood, when she swung half-round, presenting her stern to the current. She was not however long in this situation, for the ebb being nearly run out, was prodigiously strong. She soon made another half-turn, and in this instance came so suddenly about, that she cracked dreadfully in all her timbers : I feared she must have gone to pieces, but happily she still kept firm. I now felt the bottom, I thought, yield to the motion of the ship ; a moment after she swung round again, her stern to the current, and I plainly perceived that we had shifted our station. The pilot-brig at anchor near us made a signal, that he was himself in deep water, and if I could move a little further I should get into the stream : in short, after another heel, my ship dragged along the bottom, and the tide placed us in the channel. We had touched, it seems, merely on a shifting sand, which had been unable to resist the force of the current, and the weight of the ship.

I anchored at Fulta, very apprehensive as to the consequences of this accident. I founded the well carefully, but the vessel did not make water. Still however I could not but believe, that a shock so violent must have done some material injury, and my apprehensions proved in the sequel to have been well founded. I had the confidence in myself to undertake the voyage without insuring my cargo; but this accident rendering me more prudent I immediately took the precaution. Being now at ease on this head, and finding in the course of some days, that the vessel did not leak, I put to sea, directing my course with the view of making the island of Ceylon, somewhere about the flats. I soon found my vessel to be no good sailer, and therefore kept on my guard against the effects of the tides. I set sail in the beginning of November, when the currents are rapid between Ceylon and the coast of India; and knowing this, I proceeded with caution when I came within their latitude. I was obliged to keep near the land, that I might distinguish the point I was desirous of making, while it was necessary to avoid going too close, for fear of a gulf. In consequence, when I supposed myself to have arrived near the place, I was all night on the deck, observing the lead, and keeping constantly in thirty fathom water, aware that, while this was the case, I could run no risk, the strait containing only from seven fathoms to nine.

At day-break I witnessed a most extraordinary phenomenon, produced by the clouds. It was calm, the land appeared exactly on the proper point of the horizon, the hills were visible, the plain at the foot of them, the shore, the trees, every thing was perfectly distinct. It was in vain that I referred to my soundings to determine our distance from the land; I could not refuse the evidence of my eyes. I

founded however again, and found still a great depth of water, though by the appearance of these objects it ought to be shallow. I was so strongly convinced that it was the coast of Ceylon, that I got ready an anchor. The illusion continued till ten o'clock, when, the wind springing up, it vanished, to the extreme astonishment of every one, and especially of myself. I continued my route, making a small circuit towards the flats; but the currents were so rapid, that in four and twenty hours I found myself thirty leagues to the southward above my reckoning. All my endeavours to get in with the land were useless, and a sudden squall from the north-east assailing us so distressed my vessel, that the effects of her accident in the Ganges began to be visible by a small leak. The sea was extremely hollow, and from the effect of the tides very much broken. In the height of the squall, the mizen mast was carried away below the cap, which obliged us to unbend the mizen top-sail immediately. In doing this my best sailor fell overboard, and was never seen again; the waves ran so high, that he was swallowed up instantly. I hoisted out a boat, which in two minutes was stove against the ship's side, and it was by the greatest good fortune, that the sailors who were in it did not all perish: instead of one of my crew, I had nearly lost eight. I was compelled to leave the poor fellow to his fate, and the wreck of my boat to the waves, and be satisfied with regaining the seven, who had thus ventured their lives to save their comrade.

This squall greatly annoyed me, and rendered me very uneasy. I could not now regain my nothing, and I was afraid, that in spite of myself I should be obliged to visit the Maldivé islands, which was contrary to my plan. After continuing, however, three days in this state, the weather became moder-

ate. In the first part of the storm I had lost a fore-top-sail; and as my owner, from his poverty, had furnished me with a very slender stock, I had none to replace it with; but the mizen top-sail being new, and of no use, now that the top-mast to which it belonged was gone, I substituted it in the place of that which I had lost, and in this condition was fortunate enough to gain Cape Comorin: all my wishes were then confined to reaching Cochin, that I might repair my masts and rigging.

In passing opposite the coast of Trevancoor, I sent my boat ashore to get information. When it returned, it brought with it the figure of an idol, resembling a lingam or priapus, which some of the crew had taken out of a niche in a bank, where it was exposed to public adoration. The design was but too well executed, for it was as indecent as the assistance of sculpture could make it. I reprimanded the officer for permitting such a theft, of which I could not see the utility; but he alleged, that it was taken without his knowledge to serve as a tiller to the rudder, that belonging to the boat having been lost: in fact, they had steered with this phallus, the size of which may be easily conjectured from the circumstance. I am ignorant whether the degree of veneration paid to this emblem by the Indians be in proportion to its magnitude.

In the afternoon of the next day but one, I anchored in the road of Cochin, and immediately got into a boat; but it was so far to the entrance of the river, that I did not arrive there till night. The cockswain of my boat pretended to be well acquainted with the place; but, notwithstanding his knowledge, he got me on a sand-bank, where the waves beat so strong, that we were twenty times on the point of overturning, or filling with water. The entrance of the river of Cochin has this incon-

venience attending it, that when the wind blows fresh it raises a bar, which, taking the boats unawares, often endangers, and sometimes sinks them. I was more than an hour seeking in vain for the entrance of the river; at last, after frequent risks of drowning, I got from these waves, and had now to find a part of the coast where it was practicable to land; for it was too late to think of returning, in a road so distant, and with currents so strong. I ran my boat aground, and drew it upon the beach; where leaving one of the crew to take care of it, I took the rest with me, and made towards the town. With my usual good fortune, I found the gate shut, and must have remained all night upon the sands, if I had not been told, that the harbour gate shutting a little later, if we were very expeditious we might still get in. We accordingly made all the haste we could, and arrived precisely in time. A passenger in my vessel, who came ashore with me, had a letter of recommendation to one of the inhabitants, which he delivered the same night, and was invited to take up his abode at the house of the person to whom it was addressed. For myself, I went to the inn, the master of which, when informed of the arrival of the passenger, sent to let him know that his chamber was ready, and that a place would regularly be kept for him at table; leaving him, if he pleased, to reside with his friend, but acquainting him, that he would have the same sum to pay as if he lived at the inn; for that such was the *privilege* of his house, which was farmed to him by the government. This circumstance induced the passenger to resign the accommodation offered him by his friend, and take up his abode the next day at the inn. As for me the innkeeper desired me to give him a list of what I should want, telling me at the same time, that he had provided for me a palan-

quin and servants. I observed, that having but a few days to stay at Cochin, and not intending to make any visits, I thought I could very well dispense with the carriage; to which he replied, that I was at liberty in this respect to follow my inclination, but I should find it charged in his account, for it was a part of his *privilege*. I was surpris'd at so extraordinary an instance of monopoly; but conceiving it to be the duty of a traveller not to oppose the customs of the country he is visiting, I submitted.

I found the regiment of Meuron in garrison in this town. It is a Swiss regiment, but was raised in France, and is composed of Frenchmen, many of whom came to offer me their services; and among them one in particular, who said he was a butcher, and who propos'd to furnish me with such provisions and live stock as I might want at my departure. From the desire of encouraging a countryman I accepted his offer, and order'd several articles, which he promis'd me on terms more reasonable than I could get them of any one else. These I did not include in the list which I gave to the innkeeper; but the man was too well skill'd in his trade not to perceive the deficiency, and he immediately concluded that I was supplied with them from some other quarter. He said nothing, but he watch'd so narrowly, that he was soon inform'd of the affair. In consequence, he employ'd his hirelings, who seiz'd the whole of my purchases just as they were conveying on board. To get them out of his hands, I was oblig'd to pay him a duty, for this too was his *privilege*; so that eventually they cost me more than if I had purchas'd them of himself. So extensive a *privilege* made me cautious and I was afraid of taking almost a single step, lest I should unfortunately encounter some new instance of it.

While I staid ashore, one of my crew deserted. Conceiving that I too had a *privilege*, that of claiming my sailor, I sent in pursuit of him ; but here also I trenched upon a prerogative. I was taken before the fiscal, who reprimanded me, and gave me to understand, that it was the *privilege* of the hangman to apprehend deserters. I had no great difficulty in making him sensible, that, being a stranger in the country, and unacquainted with their customs, I was excusable in violating them ; that, besides, I could have no idea of interfering with the functions of this grand executor of public justice. I was then asked for a description of my sailor, and two hours after he was brought to me by the officer in question.

Though these anecdotes may be thought too trifling to be inserted in a work of a serious nature, they may have their utility in showing how cautious we should be in our behaviour, if we would shun, in a foreign country, all occasions of offence.

Cochin is a Dutch settlement on the coast of Malabar, and is their strongest station on the peninsula, since their loss of Negapatnam. I did not examine it sufficiently to be able to give an accurate description of it, but I supposed it to be in the form of a heptagon, the side next to the river included. The ramparts appeared to be extremely high, and very well fenced on the side of the land, and the ditch that surrounded them to be in a good condition. The Dutch company always kept a strong garrison there.

This town has a separate government, so that the military commander is third only in authority. There is a civil governor, who is one of the company's officers ; and under him is the fiscal, who holds the second rank, as in all the other Dutch settlements.

Cochin is constructed on a good plan, but the buildings are bad. The governor resides in a house scarcely better than a barn, situated on a spot that has no embellishments, and is overgrown with grass, as the streets are likewise. All the houses are proportionably mean, and an air of wretchedness and inactivity reigns in this colony, as in the settlements in general of the Dutch company in India. With a little exertion, however, Cochin might become a flourishing place : its commerce in the article of pepper might be rendered considerable, by holding out encouragements to merchants, and suppressing the vexations which foreigners experience on the part of the government. Its situation is admirable for the purpose, for it stands on a fine river capable of admitting very large vessels. The water, at the flood, is never less than twenty feet deep, and the harbour is sufficiently extensive for any ships, however numerous, that might trade to it. A number of small rivers and canals run into it, which facilitate the inland communication to a great distance up the country, and would give extraordinary activity to commerce. Its position at the extremity of the peninsula renders it easy of approach in all seasons, and diminishes the danger to which navigation is exposed by the monsoon from the south-west : nothing but a fine day, is necessary to enable vessels to get out, and even to reach Cape Comarin, from which there is a passage to any part of India. The teak wood, so excellent for the construction of vessels, abounds in this place, and many ships are accordingly built there ; it is indeed the most considerable branch of industry that is at present carried on. These advantages, however, are all in a great measure neglected, and Cochin is in a state of deplorable languor, from which it will never recover, till the Dutch company shall think proper to change their system, or the town

shall be fortunate enough to fall into the hands of some other nation, that may know how to value and turn to account the resources which it offers.

The inhabitants of this part of India are subject to a complaint in the legs, which is called by the names of elephantiasis and the Cochin disease. The leg swells prodigiously, without either the thigh or the foot being affected: in this state it resembles considerably the leg of an elephant, and thence derives its former appellation. The disorder is probably occasioned by the quality of the water used by the inhabitants: there are persons also much afflicted with goîtres.

This country produces pepper, arrack, and cotton: we find likewise dried fruits and cardamoms; but the last two articles are chiefly brought thither by the Arabs. Cowries also may be procured, by bespeaking them in time; for the Maldives, where they are found, are at no great distance, and in the fair season there are always boats from thence, with which we may treat for them.

The number of Europeans at Cochin, exclusively of the troops, does not exceed fifty; the Portuguese cast amounts to about five hundred, and the rest of the population is Indian. Though the town is extensive, and tolerably well filled with houses, it has the appearance of a desert. The temperature of the climate is the same as at Pondicherry, but the seasons are contrary; the mountains of the Gauts forming a barrier which separates summer and winter. The seasons are not subject in India to the same variations as in Europe.

The winds, with the exception of a few irregularities, by no means frequent, blow from two parts only of the horizon; from the quarter between north-north-east and east-north-east for six months, and the remainder of the year from south-south-west,

to west-south-west. The passing of the sun across the equator determines the alteration of season. The wind, while the sun is in the northern hemisphere, blows from the south-west quarter, and *vice versa*; the currents also are then reversed, and follow the direction of the wind. These seasons are called monsoons. During the prevalence of the south-west monsoon, the Gauts, intercepting the storms and clouds, prevent them from passing to the coast of Coromandel, where, the weather being then beautiful, the season called summer prevails. The coast of Malabar, on the contrary, is at that period subject to violent rains and squalls, and there they have what they call winter. The currents run in a southerly direction on the coast of Malabar, and on the other coast towards the north. Six months after the winds change to the north-east; and the mountains producing a similar effect on the contrary side, stop the rains and storms in their course, and detain them on the coast of Coromandel, and accordingly that of Malabar has summer in its turn. The currents then run in a southerly direction on the former coast, and towards the north on the latter.

By means of this certainty of the seasons, the most indifferent vessels accomplish their voyages without difficulty, by taking advantage of the winds and currents.

Not being able to sell my rice to my satisfaction at Cochin, I was on the point of proceeding with it as far as Surat, when a captain who had come from that coast assured me, that a scarcity no longer prevailed there, but that grain was very much wanted in Arabia, particularly at Mocha, where the famine, he said, was extreme, and I could not do better than go to that place, which would prove to me an excellent market. I have since found, that he told me this with a view to deceive me, and prevent me.

from going to Surat, as he was himself purchasing a cargo of rice to carry thither : I believed his account, however, and immediately proceeded on my voyage.

In four and twenty hours I was in sight of the straits of Babel-mandel, which I cleared at seven o'clock in the evening ; and entering the Red Sea, I anchored the next day at Mocha, about thirteen leagues beyond the straits.

From the straits to Mocha, the navigation is perfectly safe along the coast, and there is good anchoring every-where : but the approach to the town is dangerous, and in entering the road care must be taken both to steer and to sound with exactness. Vessels should never go nearer than thirteen fathom water, on account of the sand-banks, and should then keep to the north till the front of the town is in view, or the dome of the great mosque bearing east south-east. They may then proceed in safety to the anchorage, where they will have six or seven fathoms, in a sandy bottom. The north fort lies between north-east-by-east, and north-east-by-north, within about half-gun shot of a twelve pounder. There is another channel near the south fort, frequented by small vessels ; but I would not recommend it, unless to those who are thoroughly acquainted with it : a vessel must moor with the best bower to the south, on account of the squalls, which in that quarter are very violent. The sea however is calm during their prevalence, being inclosed by the sands and reefs which shelter the road, while the sky, though the sun shines intensely hot, has every appearance of a hurricane.

When the monsoon is settled, the period of which is from the latter end of November to the beginning of June, the wind, blowing from the south and south-south-east, comes charged with all the vapours

of Abyssinia, and brings with it even the sand of that country. In consequence, the atmosphere seems inflamed, the sky looks red, nothing scarcely is to be seen at the distance of a league; and the burning sand carried along by the wind every-where scorches the vegetation. It is customary at Mocha to cultivate a great quantity of basil plants, with which the inhabitants decorate their apartments and windows; but these must be removed at the commencement of the southerly monsoon, or they would otherwise be killed, not only by the sand, which would destroy them, but also by the wind the heat of which is sometimes insupportable. All communication with vessels in the road is then interrupted.

A wind from the south lasts generally one, and sometimes two quadratures: but at the new and full moon it is commonly succeeded, for the space of three days, by a northerly wind, which cools the air, and purifies the atmosphere.

The road of Mocha is of a circular form, describing an arc, of which the chord is the anchorage: the two extremities of this chord are defended by the forts I have mentioned. The small vessels of the country anchor near the shore, by a handsome pier, built for the convenience of loading and unloading. The seasons for entering and quitting the Red Sea are determined by the change of the monsoons, which do not, as in India, depend upon the equinoxes. The last days of November, or the beginning of December, bring the southerly monsoon; and from that period the currents set into the straits of Babel-mandel with a prodigious rapidity, till the commencement of June, when the wind veering to the north or north-north-west, they run in a southerly direction*. In the northerly monsoon, the

* This is confirmed by D'Apres de Maneville. See the *Nep-tune Oriental*. This work is the result of the observations of the

vessels coming to Mocha cannot make the road on account of the violence of the wind, and are obliged to go to a neighbouring bay to anchor, which however they can leave in the intervals in which the north wind prevails. During the whole of this monsoon, those which are in the Red Sea must remain there, no vessels being able to surmount the united force of the wind and the current.

The pilgrims going to Mecca from different parts of India take advantage of this season. Whole ship-loads of these religionists often arrive, influenced, many of them, by motives of trade, interest, and a desire of pillage, more than by devotion. Nothing can equal the disorder which they occasion in the caravanfaries and other places. The inhabitants therefore are eager to furnish them with whatever they want, that they may set off for Jedda, whence they proceed to Mecca.

While I was at Mocha, an unfortunate English captain fell a victim to their wickedness. Several of them had missed their vessel in returning, either purposely, or that their Moorish or foreign captain would carry them no further, or that the crime which they afterwards committed was a preconceived plan. They were twenty in number, and they waited on captain Nun, who commanded a vessel of the sort called *grab*, to ask for a passage to Bengal. As he was returning to Calcutta, after a profitable voyage, he desired nothing better than to

best navigators, and should be taken as authority, disregarding the reports of some modern travellers.

While the winds blow thus in the Red Sea, they vary in the gulf outside the straits; that is, as a general rule, they blow from the east between November and June, and during the other six months from the west; so that from November to June the wind is east in the gulf, and south-south-east in the Red Sea: and afterwards for six months west in the gulf, and north-north-west in the Red Sea.

serve these men, whom he could not well suspect of any evil design. The terms were soon agreed upon, and the article of provision was as readily adjusted; for his crew being Lascars, and consequently Musfulmans, what he had provided for them would serve also for the passengers. He sailed and cleared the straits; but the vessel had no sooner doubled Socotora, than these miscreants rushed upon the few Europeans, five or six in number, who had the direction of the vessel, and murdered them all, beginning with the captain. Some of the Lascars, who attempted to oppose them, were also killed, while others got up into the tops, and put themselves into a posture of defence. A capitulation took place, and they were offered their lives, if they would come down and assist to conduct the vessel to any port, no matter where. They agreed, and for some days tranquillity seemed to be restored; but as they drove about at random, and came in sight of no land, the assassins suspected some trick, and fell upon them again. Having had time however in this instance to put themselves upon their guard, they resisted, and mixed their blood with that of their murderers. At last, after a battle in which, on both sides, five or six were killed, a suspension of arms was a second time agreed upon, and the Lascars resumed once more the management of the vessel. The day subsequent to this affair, coming in sight of the Maldives, the pirates made an offer to the Lascars of the boats belonging to the vessel, in which they might get ashore as well as they could: they accepted it, and quitted the vessel, which since that period has never been heard of.

As for the Lascars, they landed upon the first island they could make, but were sent to another, in which resided the king. They were treated humanely by this prince, who ordered that a passage

free of expence should be given them to the coast of Malabar. They disembarked at Mangalore, and had the presence of mind to declare themselves Lascars belonging to the French. Accordingly the officers of Tippoo received them as friends, and they were conveyed to Mahé, whence they returned to their home. This tragical event was inserted in the public papers, and every exertion was made to discover the vessel and the pirates; but the fate of neither has ever been known.

With the exception of a few Moorish ships, and one or two from Bengal, which come every year as far as Jedda, the navigation of the Red Sea is confined to vessels, which they call *daous*. These are open boats without any kind of covering, and which a heavy wave would be sufficient to fill and send to the bottom; but they are rarely exposed to such danger, from keeping almost always near the coast. Often they will make their way, even between the land and the reefs, which prevent other vessels from approaching it, but across which there are passes with which they are acquainted. These boats are of a handsome form, and may be brought to considerable perfection. They carry a single square sail; and though the mast is ill proportioned, and awkwardly placed, and the sail often formed only of straw, they go through the water and perform their voyages in a very superior style.

The business of the port of Mocha is performed by two large and very heavy boats, pointed at the ends, but how constructed I could not ascertain; apparently they were put together like the boats in Europe; but their shape was so singular, that I was at a loss what to make of them. They carry a mast and an unwieldy sail of straw, made of pieces about two feet wide, and five or six long, sewed together. By the help of this sail, which it is diffi-

cult either to hoist or to manage, they perform expeditiously the business of the road; but every time they tack, being obliged to take it down before they shift it, they fall during these manœuvres so much to leeward in rough weather, that they cannot get to Mocha, and are compelled to take shelter in the adjoining bay, whence they come the next morning to the pier*.

Mocha is situated at the extremity of the dominions of the iman of Sana, in the province of Yemen, on a small bay, formed by an island of sand towards the south, and a ridge of rocks to the north. On each of the points of land which inclose the road, the Arabs have built a fort. These forts are a wretched kind of circular redoubts, the foundations of which are masses of granite: the embrasures also are formed of large stones or pieces of coral: but these openings, though tolerably wide are scarcely more than two feet high. The whole is surmounted with a building of bricks raised over the artillery like a crust over a pie, without any inside work, even so much as a beam, to give it so-

* The latitude of Cape Babel-mandel has been determined by a series of observations, taken between that cape and Cape Saint Anthony, to be $12^{\circ} 43'$ north.—By D'Apres, it is $12^{\circ} 45'$.—By Bruce, $12^{\circ} 39' 20''$.

Latitude of Mocha, $13^{\circ} 24'$.—By D'Apres, $13^{\circ} 22'$.—By Niebuhr, $13^{\circ} 19'$.

Variation north-west: At Mocha, $12^{\circ} 45'$.—By D'Apres. 13° .—By Niebuhr, $12^{\circ} 40'$.—At the straits, $12^{\circ} 54'$.—By D'Apres, $12^{\circ} 40'$.

The tides are 12 hours.—According to Niebuhr, 11 only

The tide rises 4 feet.—According to Niebuhr, 3 feet 6 inches.

Longitude, by observation at Mocha, $43^{\circ} 7'$ east of Paris.

lidity. It is only of the thicknefs of one brick, fo that the wind, the rains, or the firing of the guns, is often fufficient to bring down this roof upon the heads of thofe who are beneath it.

Thefe batteries, which a fingle fhot would demolifh, have a flag-ftaff, on which the ftandard of Mahomet is difplayed every Friday : this is a red flag, with a white two-bladed fword in the middle. The figure of the fword is miferably delineated ; the handle is extremely fhort, and the two blades are fo awkwardly defigned, that, inftead of fword, one might take them for a pair of breeches.

The town is of a circular form, and has fix gates : of thefe, one is called the Sacred Gate, through which no foreigners are permitted to pafs ; and if any one fhould be rash enough to attempt it in fpite of the prohibition, he would expofe himfelf to danger from the Bedouins, who are always encamped on the outside, and who might punifh his temerity with a dagger.

The town is without a ditch or any external defence, and the wall all round is every where acceffible. The foundations and firft tier of the wall, to the height of four feet in fome places, and in others only three, confift of large ftones intermixed with pieces of coral, which proves that the materials were fcarce when the town was completed, and that they ufed for the walls whatever they could find. Next to thefe ftones is a masonry of brick-work four feet thick, and extending to the height of from fifteen to eighteen feet. At the top a parapet is raifed of the thicknefs of a fingle brick only, with holes, through which to fire mufketry. The platform may be about three feet and a half wide, and the whole is built fo flightly, that on every violent ftorm part of it gives way and tumbles into the town. This feeble wall is fortified every four

hundred yards by a large tower, similar to the forts I have described, and in the same defective state. Those which defend the Sacred Gate are the only ones capable of any resistance; they are in some degree firm, are covered, have even lodgments within, and perhaps would not, like the rest, be levelled by the first ball of a cannon.

On looking at these fortifications, it is plain—what will hardly be credited in Europe—that, when a place is attacked, the assault is made by cavalry. Three or four shots will make a very large breach, which a further cannonade soon renders smooth and practicable for horses; the cavalry then set off in a gallop, and the town is instantly taken. This is their only mode of assault; they are ignorant of any other. Their artillery is in the same rude state as their military tactics. It consists wholly of iron pieces mounted on naval carriages, which they remove with great difficulty from one place to another. I was strongly solicited to enter into the service of the iman, for the purpose of taking the direction of this part of their force; and for a while I would readily have consented, but for the fatal condition of the turban, which was not to be dispensed with, and which I could not even think of without shuddering.

The greater part of the materials employed in the building of Mocha was obtained from Aden, a town that was formerly opulent: it is situated outside the strait, in one of the finest bays in the world. Its position is so excellent, that Alexander, it is said, would have made it the centre of the commerce which he purposed to establish with India. The iman of Sana, desirous of attracting vessels to his dominions, fixed however upon the little bay of Mocha, to which he annexed so many privileges and encouragements, that Aden, notwithstanding

the superiority of its harbour, and the impossibility of getting through the straits from the other, except during the particular monsoon, was abandoned, and all the commerce transferred to the new establishment; so that Aden exhibited shortly a picture only of ruins. Mocha reaped advantages from this forlorn condition of its neighbour; and is now continually receiving stones and other materials from the wreck of that town, of which the vestiges that remain are scarcely sufficient to determine what was its former extent. At a distance in the offing, some turrets and a wall are still distinguishable on the hill, at the foot of which is the entrance of the bay; but the town itself no longer exists: a wonderful example of the inconstancy of fortune, which has removed into a hole in the midst of a barren plain, where the water even is scarcely fit to drink, the prosperity which a town admirably situated was unable to preserve, though enjoying all the advantages suitable to navigation, together with a fertile soil, among mountains and valleys, that gave health and pleasantness to the scene. One of the causes that contributed most to the removal of the commerce to Mocha was, that the market for coffee being in the territory of the iman of Sana, he wished to have it shipped from a port within the boundary of his states, and for that purpose laid upon the article so heavy a duty when it was taken to Aden, that the merchants to avoid this charge adopted the practice of shipping it at Mocha.

Next to the gate called the Sacred Gate, towards the north side of the town, is the one called *Babel-mamoudy*. The French consul has the right of making his entrance on horseback through this gate, without being obliged to alight before the house of the governor; a privilege in this country that is by no means trifling. It is on a spot outside this gate

that the Christians are buried who die in the town. There are two tombs, with an inscription to inform passengers, that they were raised to the memory of two captains of vessels trading to Mocha. The rest of the premises contains only the remains of a heap of bricks scattered over the ground. It is from the situation of this spot that the children so frequently exclaim, *Frangi, Babel-mamoudy!* which signifies *Christians to the burying-ground*; a wish which they express in running after foreigners in the streets. This hatred is deep, and would be difficult to extirpate.

I was received upon my landing in the usual manner: a party of the principal officers of the custom-house, preceded by the French factors, came to meet me, and conducted me under the Bahar, or *gate of the sea*. The *emir bahar* was there in council, and gave me a place by his side. He rose up to receive me, laying his right hand upon his heart, which is the customary salutation. We were perfumed at first with incense of benzoïn and oil of roses, and then with a sort of aloes wood, which is valuable and scarce; it gives a smell in burning that is exquisitely sweet. It is in great request with the Arabs and Persians, who purchase it at the price of an equal weight of gold. They cut, and even grate small quantities of it to burn, and are careful to receive the smoke of it in their clothes. After this ceremony, the emir entertained us with coffee, which I found it impossible to drink. The Arabs in general do not roast their coffee, nor make, as we do, the liquor from the berry, but use for this purpose the pulp only, which we throw away. This they dry, and make of it a slight infusion, like tea*. The beverage thus made is extremely insipid, though deemed refreshing by them, and of a more delicate

* Niebuhr says the same, page 49, edition of Copenhagen.

taste than the coffee drank by Europeans ; but my palate, I confess, was not refined enough to discover its excellence, and I thought it scarcely better than hot water. I could not conceal my repugnance, which was not the way to confirm me in the favour of the emir, who was a grave personage, but extremely civil, and who had received me with considerable kindness. I made my apology by means of my Bannian, who informed him of my dislike. The ceremony of the coffee being over, I was perfumed again, and dismissed ; that is, the French factors conducted me to the house of the governor, amidst a great crowd, who shouted, sung, howled, and made such loud and hideous noises that I was almost deafened. To do honour to my entry, the governor, as was the custom, had sent with those who were to meet me, two horses richly caparisoned, and which were made to carry themselves prancingly, wheeling from side to side. The dust occasioned by their motions, and by the concourse of people that accompanied me, added to the heat of the sun, which was scorching, and the noise of the barbarous instruments with which they regaled me, rendered the journey almost insupportable, though it was a short one, for we had only to cross the square belonging to the custom-house : we proceeded however at a very slow rate. When we arrived at the governor's house, we had to ascend a narrow flight of steps, at the landing-place of which I was asked for my sword. I refused to deliver it, and was preparing without further ceremony to return, when my factors stopped me, and the governor was informed of my conduct, who gave orders to let me do as I pleased. I entered the audience-chamber, where an arm-chair was brought me, antiquated, worm-eaten, and large, like those which are delineated in ancient pictures of chivalry. I was plac-

ed opposite the governor, and two soldiers with sabres and shields were stationed, one on each side of me. The governor, who was an old man, after saluting me in the manner of the Arabs, by laying his hand upon his heart, made a sign to me with his finger to be seated, pointing to the arm-chair. As I did not understand his salutation and was ignorant of the meaning of his other motion. I disregarded the sign; and, conceiving that he offered me his hand, I took it, and, to his great surprise, gave it a cordial squeeze. I observed a gesture in the soldiers, as if to prevent me; but, whether checked by a look of their master, or of some other person, they did not touch me. I took my seat, and the first compliment being over, the governor asked me by an interpreter, why I had refused to surrender my sword. I gave him to understand, that, being a military officer, a custom established in my country forbade me to surrender it without fighting; and that it was deemed as disgraceful in Europe to give up our arms, as it would be thought here in him to give up his turban, if any one should have the insolence to demand it. He laughed heartily at the comparison, and making a sign to the soldiers, they withdrew. I was then perfumed anew, and had coffee presented to me; but my Bannian telling him that I had disliked this beverage at the house of the emir, he sent to the apartments of the women for a pilaw, which I was obliged to taste for fear of offending him, and indeed I had no reason to repent my compliance, for I found it delicious. He was highly delighted, and, judging from his civilities, I might have eaten my fill. I expressed my gratitude for the kind reception he had given me, and begged his indulgence and protection if, as a foreigner, I should fail of observing the customs of the country, of which I was ignorant; adding, that it would be

always involuntary on my part, should I ever be the occasion of complaint to him. He obligingly replied, that I might in all instances rely upon him, and that he should be happy in giving me proofs of his friendship. At the same time he accorded me the privilege of walking in his gardens, and particularly on Fridays, when I should be more, he said, at my ease, as it was the day of mosque, and he should himself be in town: I had only to send in my name; but he requested, if I should be told any of his women were there, that I would not go in. With this single exception, I might bathe, and should be waited upon whenever I pleased; and he added, that it would be a pleasure to him to see me availing myself of the liberty he had offered me. This amiable old man was not long governor after this period, as I shall relate in the sequel; but, when reduced to a private station, I still continued to cultivate his friendship. He was a Sayd, that is to say, of the tribe of Mahomet; in consequence of which he retained the green turban, and continued to enjoy a high degree of respect.

The house of the governor is a large square building, with small windows looking towards the ground appropriated to the exercise of the cavalry. His seraglio is on the first floor of this building, and he lives himself on the second, for the benefit of the air: the interior distribution is the same as that of the houses in general.

Near to one corner of this ground is a large caravansary, which is occupied only at the time of the pilgrimages to Mecca. It is a large square building, inclosing a court, with a fountain in the middle for the ablutions prescribed by the law of Mahomet. The building is merely a shed extending round the court, without either door or windows, and supported by pillars. It very seldom rains at Mocha; and

the roofs of these sheds are so low, that, were it otherwise, the rain could not well annoy those who are under them.

This spacious building has but a single opening, which is the door. The ground before the front of it is of sufficient extent for the camels and asses of the travellers, who lodge at the caravanfary at a trifling expence, of which the object is solely to defray the charges of keeping it clean.

I was conducted back with the same parade to the French lodge, where M. de Moncrif, agent to the French marine, liberated me from my retinue, by throwing among the mob the value of a couple of piastres, in small pieces of money.

I am happy to inform the reader, that my reception at this place had nothing in it peculiar or personal to myself; with the exception of the great kindness of the governor, it is the usual etiquette, every captain that arrives being received in the same manner.

As there is a ceremony observed on arriving, so there is one also at departing; which is to take leave of the governor. The usual time for this is a little before the third prayer in the evening. The visitor, when he comes into the presence of the governor, is immediately muffled up in a red Arabian robe, which is thrown over his clothes by two men, and which he carries away with him as a mark of friendship, and token of the hospitality of the Arabs. At my departure I received an elegant casimir robe of this kind, which I used as a dressing-gown for the remainder of my voyage.

There are two European lodges or factories at Mocha, one for the French, and one for the English; and each nation has the privilege of having its own flag over its appropriate habitation. That belonging to the French is a very poor building, of

which the warehouses only are good : but the English one is handsome, and can without difficulty accommodate the officers of five or six vessels. The French house, on the contrary, is only sufficient for the consul, so that every captain of that nation has to provide for himself a lodging elsewhere, which is a serious evil in case of any dispute with the people, who are extremely quarrelsome, and would prevent the French, if they could, from assembling together, that, by taking them singly they might the more readily get the better of them. The English have the advantage of a mansion that would maintain a siege, and by being together they might defend themselves for a time, escape to the shore, and get on board their ships, in spite of the inhabitants and soldiers combined ; for the latter are so extremely ill armed, that twenty resolute men with bayonets fixed would be sufficient to put any one of their battalions into confusion.

Almost contiguous to the caravanfary is the custom-house, from which the principal part of the revenue of the prince is derived. The governor is at the head of this department, and passes half the day there in a pavilion by the scales, examining the articles that are weighed, keeping an account of them himself, and registering the receipt, which he pays without delay into the exchequer. The slightest instance of neglect on his part would be charged as an act of dishonesty, and might bring upon him very serious consequences. The governor, who had treated me with so much kindness, lost his place, and was heavily fined by the iman, for having omitted some item in the statement of a receipt. Another Sayd, whom I saw in prison, and who professed great attachment to the French, had his feet, as well as hands, loaded with irons, for purloining the duty on a small quantity of tobacco

of about six pounds' weight. It was by dint only of money, that, after being a whole year in prison, he saved his life.

The officers of government are employed all day long in this business; every article of merchandize having an account taken of it, and being subject to a duty. The custom-house is a large square inclosure, with a shed extending round it, where the different articles are deposited, and remain till they are officially cleared.

There are three mosques at Mocha, two of which are small, and the other large and handsome, with very high domes. The Arabs do not use bells, but have men who stand in a little gallery built round the dome, and call the faithful to prayers, as loudly as their lungs will permit them. They are heard distinctly, particularly at night, vociferating in a hollow tone from these stations. To me nothing could be more awkward and unalluring than this method of summoning the people to the duties of religion.

The Mussulmans attend the mosques regularly every day, though allowed to pray in their own houses; but Friday is the principal day of solemnity, as Sunday is with us. On that day the governor goes to mosque in the morning in great state, at the head of all the troops, both cavalry and infantry. Having performed his devotions, he is conducted back in the same manner by the whole garrison, when the infantry form along one side of the ground before his house, and the cavalry perform their exercise. The governor at their head begins some courses on a gallop, which they call manœuvres, after which the troops form in two lines, and charge, brandishing a long lance; the horses are well on the haunches, which gives them the power of stopping short on their hocks, even when going full speed.

To break the horses to this exercise, their legs are tied together in the stable, each fore foot to the corresponding hind foot, with the distance of about twelve inches between. In this posture they contract the habit of drawing themselves up, and are extremely pleasant to ride: they are naturally so strong, that this practice does not in the least injure their fleetness. There are several kinds of Arabian horses. The sort called *Mascatt* is produced by a mixture with the Persian breed, and is slender, light, and delicately formed: that of Yemen is a native of the country, large and vigorous, the head and loins square, and the chest thick; in running, what they lose in lightness is compensated by strength.

After two charges of this kind, the governor breaks a lance with some of the principal officers, and the rest in parties follow the example. They challenge and pursue each other, performing feats which require considerable dexterity. The challenger gives the reins to his horse, which runs the whole length of the place in a gallop without stopping: his antagonist pursues him, and aims a blow at him behind with a stick, and which the address of the other consists in parrying with a similar stick. As every officer has one or two attendants, he gives them his lance before he begins this encounter, and takes instead of it one of these sticks, which is about five feet long, and is used as a javelin to dart at his enemy. If the horseman that flies parries the throw, and makes the stick of his adversary fall to the ground, he gains the contest; but the principal skill is either to strike off the turban of his adversary, or to dart the stick so directly on his back, that it may rebound, and the pursuer before it falls be able to recover it. This is the more difficult, because, the distance being short, and the horses running full speed, the course lasts as it were but an

instant; of course a great deal of alertness is requisite.

The Arabs make use of bridles similar, or nearly so, to ours; with bits like those which the French call *à gorge de pigeon*. In riding they keep a very tight hand, so that the mouths of all their horses have the bars very much bruised. They also make use of saddles; but the bows are so much higher than ours, and they place between the saddle and the horse such a quantity of cushions and cloths, that the rider is raised six inches at least above the back of the animal. In this situation, the heels hardly reaching to the flank, he can neither avail himself of a spur, nor are his knees of any help to him in keeping his seat: the saddle however is so elevated with trussiquins both before and behind, that he seems to be placed as in a boat, from which nothing can dislodge him. They have housings as we have, and very magnificent ones, red, blue, and green, embroidered with gold. They have stirrups also, but no spurs. The stirrups do not resemble ours, but are large copper shoes, in which they place the whole foot. As this shoe is larger than the foot, it extends at the heel, and it is with this extremity of the shoe or stirrup that they goad the side of the horse: a blow given flatwise produces very little effect, but a kick with the end of it makes the horse instantly obey, and gives him very great pain; for it is generally so sharp as to be capable even of piercing the flank.

The horses are not shod, the hoof growing so hard that it does not lose its edge, and has seldom occasion to be pared.

These horsemen, when properly equipped, have each two attendants, a lance nearly twenty feet long, slender, and elastic, not intended to be thrown, two javelins about five or six feet, used for that

purpose, a brace of pistols, and a sabre and shield : the last two articles are not worn by the cavalier, but are fastened to the saddle : their favourite weapon is the javelin. The whole is furnished by the iman ; no one, as a matter of right, being allowed to possess a horse through the whole of that prince's dominions. These animals are all distributed by the sovereign, who gives them to such as he deems worthy of this mark of his favour, and takes them away again at his will. Every Arab of illustrious birth enters into the cavalry, and in this manner receives a horse, which he maintains at his own expense, and may ride when he pleases. The officers of the custom-house also belong to this corps, which is in this country as high a distinction as that of nobility in Europe. The cavaliers are very much respected ; they wear no uniform ; but dress every one as he likes, exhibiting a motley and uncouth appearance to such as have been accustomed to the regularity of dress in European troops. They ride in their benish and trowsers, resembling so many judges rather than soldiers, and have nothing in their air that is in the smallest degree military. To look at them, it is impossible to suppose that the whole corps could stand against ten well-armed men, notwithstanding the superiority of their horses. As to their single combats, it is pretty evident that in point of agility and skill no one of these cavaliers would be a match for an hussar ; not but that most of them are skilful in the management of their horses, which are often however of themselves sufficiently tractable. A young Sayd who was my neighbour, and brother of him whom I have mentioned as being in prison and irons, was desirous one day of giving me a specimen of his address in horsemanship. He fixed his long lance in the ground, and without letting it go put his horse into a canter :

round it, first to the right and then to the left, changing his hand under his right arm, without for a moment stopping his horse, or quitting his hold of the lance.

The foot-soldiers are taken from the mass of the people; they are a most wretched body of troops, without the slightest idea of military movements; they march in confusion, and are with difficulty drawn up in files three deep. The dress of these soldiers consists of a linen shirt in the manner of the country, and a drapery of coarse brown cloth. The commander is armed with a battle-axe, and the soldiers with match-locks, of the most ancient construction. The match is carried in the right hand, but the soldier applies it to the pan with his left in such a manner that in doing it he can preserve no steadiness, and generally burns either his hand or his whisker. Their pay is barely sufficient for their subsistence; and even what they receive is very irregularly issued. If a complaint be at any time made to the sovereign against a person that is rich, he is fined a certain sum and turned over to the military, to whom it is consigned as pay, either in arrear or advance. The soldiers are fond of being paid in this way, because the collection vesting in themselves, they are sure of getting it; they will besides admit of no delay, and in doing themselves justice are apt to exceed rather than fall short of the sum that is imposed.

These soldiers are brought with great difficulty to any degree of discipline. They are composed of the lower order of people in the towns, the inhabitants of the mountain, and some Bedouins, or Arabs of the desert, who enlist from being unable to maintain themselves at home. They are black, with shining or frizzled hair, according as they are of Arabian or Abyssinian extraction, but generally

the former. The nobility are almost white, their copper tint being so light, that many of the Sayds are fairer than the quadroons in our colonies. The children resulting from an intercourse of these Sayds with their Abyssinian slaves have a mixture of the African characteristics; but those produced from women of their own race perpetuate its beauty, and have every other Asiatic distinction. They supply their seraglios with females from Abyssinia, of whom whole cargoes arrive at a time. I have seen among them some women of exquisite beauty; they are black, but nothing is so bewitching as their form, or so elegant and graceful as their motions. I was one day so struck with one of these slaves as she landed from her *daou*, that I instantly made a proposal by my Bannian to purchase her: she lifted up a dirty piece of coarse blue cloth, which served her for a veil, and exposed a most charming figure. I inquired her price; but the merchant, seeing it was a Christian who wanted her, answered, that he supposed my Bannian to have spoken in behalf of some Mussulman, and refused to treat with me.

Beside these girls, the Abyssinians send also cattle to this market, and among them a species of sheep of the African breed, with large tails and long hair, precisely like those at the Cape of Good Hope.

A great number of Bedouins repair to Mocha; to purchase such articles as they want. They are Arabs of a vagabond tribe, wandering about the mountains. Their dress and appearance are by no means prepossessing; and as to manners, they are in general morose, insolent, and to an offensive word will often reply with a stroke of a dagger. They are the more dangerous, as they do not hesitate to fall many upon one. They usually encamp without the Sacred Gate where their camels are an

obstruction to the passage. Their complexion is black, and they have shining black hair. They are robust and well made, have a savage aspect, go always armed to the very chin, and are extremely quarrelsome. I had some of them introduced to my house for the purpose of being acquainted with them, and I treated them with hospitality to prejudice them in my favour, intending to visit a small town called Moza, about four leagues distant in the mountains; and as I wished to go on horseback without attendants, and to walk about freely in the day, I should be liable frequently to meet great numbers of them. Most of them refused what I offered; others, while eating my pilaw, could not lay aside their ferocity: one only violated their precept by accepting some brandy: he assured me afterwards, that their tribe would do me no injury, which I found to be true. I have passed frequently since through a troop of these people, and have stopped to look at their camels, without their expressing either dissatisfaction or pleasure.

Mocha is built on a very indifferent plan; the streets are well adapted to the country, but an European would think them disagreeable; the houses are lofty, and the streets narrow, for the purpose of being shaded. This method, which would seemingly check the circulation of the air, contributes however to keep the streets cool; and when the weather is hot they are frequently watered. There is not a street in the whole town sufficiently wide for a cart to pass through, and it is as much as the camels when loaded can effect.

The middle of the town is occupied by the bazar, of which half is covered in, deriving light from holes made at regular distances in the roof. This bazar is a perfect labyrinth, in which I was twenty times lost. It is under the covered part of the

building that the market for dry goods, such as linen, silks, glass, porcelain, &c. is held. At one end of it is the street leading to the Sacred Gate, and it is here that grain, dry fruit, oil, grease, &c. are exposed to sale. The smell of this part of the bazar is dreadful. The Arabs make great use of *asa-fœtida*, and the market was at all times full of this commodity. The stench arising from it, added to the smell of the oil, was intolerable to me; and whenever, compelled by business, I passed that way, though I escaped as expeditiously as possible, the odour still followed me, and I was obliged to hasten home and fumigate my clothes with incense, to destroy the effluvia of this odious drug, of which I can now scarcely write the name without resorting in like manner to the use of perfumes.

The population of Mocha is very considerable; I reckon it at eighteen thousand souls, exclusively of the camp of the Jews, which is close to the south side of the town. The houses are all built of brick, with extremely small openings for light, except the blind on each story, which is an enclosed balcony, with apertures to look through. They resemble at a distance the balconies in Spain, and at first sight Mocha has very much the appearance of a Spanish town.

The houses have uniformly argamasse roofs, with a little shed, called *pandals*, erected on them, and covered with matting on account of the dew, which is heavy here, as in all countries where there is very little rain: under these *pandals* the inhabitants pass the evening, and frequently the night. For myself, I could sleep no where else, not only from the violence of the heat, but on account also of the cats. This town is the patrimony of these animals; nothing can equal their voraciousness and disposition to theft. The windows being obliged to be open all

night for the sake of the air, they have an opportunity of entering and rummaging the apartments, where they squall, fight, and make so terrible a racket, that it is impossible to sleep; and instead of going away when they are driven, they will growl, set up their backs in defiance, and almost attack you. I killed or caused to be killed every four-and-twenty hours half a dozen regularly of these animals; but they were the lernian hydra, the more I destroyed, the greater number returned. At last I resigned to them my apartment, and went on the house-top to sleep, where they gave me no disturbance.

The houses of the Arabs are much less convenient than ours. The most useful articles of their furniture are in the highest degree awkward: their locks in particular are master-pieces of ignorance; the box, springs, bolt, key, are all made of wood, and so unwieldy as to weigh at least twenty pounds: nor do they answer the purpose for which they are intended; any key will open them as well as that which was made for the purpose, and which will often indeed not do so. The houses are almost all built on the same plan. The stair-case leads to a large anti-chamber, common to the whole floor, having the apartments round it. Instead of pavement or flooring, they have slight beams of palm-wood covered with straw, and over this lime. This sort of floor has very little solidity, and is never level, so that a table with four legs will seldom stand firm. The hall in which visitors are received is covered with a carpeting of straw, and has a matress laid round the sides, on which are a great quantity of cushions to sit or lie upon at pleasure, with small Persian carpets at the feet, when the intention is to be sumptuous. Above, all round the room, is one or more shelves loaded with porcelain, which is the luxury of the country. They

have no looking-glasses, nor any costly articles of furniture: porcelain constitutes the whole of their decorations. In the middle of the room a kind of garden is erected in the form of an amphitheatre, the centre of which is occupied by a large hooka, furnished with pipes for the use of the company, and the circumference with pots of flowers, and particularly basil, which is highly esteemed.

The great felicity of an Arab is to be in a current of air, lolling upon a pile of cushions, imbibing the vapour of perfumes which are burnt at his side, and smoking supinely his hooka, with no thought, no care to molest him, persuaded that the next day will bring with it a return of the same indolence, and the same enjoyments. The first story of a house is usually occupied by the women, who are seldom to be seen, and who have a small court appropriated to them in the inner part of the building, towards which their balconies look.

One of our friends, not very rich, of the race of the inhabitants of the mountains, and of course extremely black, gave us one day an invitation to his house, which we readily accepted. He introduced us into an apartment similar to the one I have described. I was desirous of seeing his seraglio, and I requested the favour of him, but to no purpose; he would not consent. Finding me earnest in this point, he alleged at last motives of religion, which silenced me; but, in consequence of my importunity, he suffered his women to drink their sherbet with us. They were three in number, and were veiled; one of them was his sister. We were talking Portuguese, and were jovial and merry; but as soon as they entered, he begged us to assume a graver deportment. The sherbet was brought, and I waited expecting the women to unveil: but no; they received their cups with a *salam**, and drank under

* A sort of salutation or compliment.—T.

their veils. The extreme blackness of their hands in some degree moderated my desire of seeing their faces, and there was besides nothing very alluring in their figure; yet, like a true Frenchman, I conceived it a mark of politeness to express the wish, that, by seeing, I might have an opportunity of admiring them. Our friend however would by no means consent to this, except as to his sister; and here he previously enjoined on us the greatest circumspection, which we promised to observe. She was then ordered to unveil. At first she made an appearance of hesitating; but a repetition of the command determined her, and she let down an *ourgandi* that was fastened to her head, and discovered a handsome negro person, with fine eyes, prominent bosom, and a delicate skin. From being exposed in this manner to the gaze of two Christians, she appeared to suffer pain, and sat in a state of embarrassment difficult to be expressed, casting down her eyes, without daring to look at us. Her brother meanwhile was watching all her motions. At last proposing to me a cup of sherbet, I said that I would take one with pleasure, if his sister would do me the honour to present it to me. This seemingly displeased him, for he made her a sign, upon which the veil was resumed; and the three women withdrew instantly. After this, he would never admit his sister into my presence. I was piqued at his continued refusal, and endeavoured in every way I could devise to obtain without his knowledge a sight of her. He however heard of my proceedings, and reproached me in terms expressive not only of the danger I was incurring, but of the ingratitude with which I requited his friendship. His remonstrances made me ashamed of my conduct; and I gave up a pursuit which honour forbade, and a temporary dereliction of duty had tempted me to carry too far.

The dress of the Arabs is well understood, yet in our theatres the Turkish turban is continually confounded with theirs. The turban of the Arabs has one, and sometimes two pendants behind, like the mitre of our bishops, distinguishing it from that of the other Mussulmans. These pendants are merely the ends of the cloth of which the turban is made.

Their benish or robe, in the fulness of the body and the sleeves, is nearly like that of the benedictine monks. Under this, they have a silk coat, covering a tunic (jacket without sleeves) of linen, or other light materials; and underneath these again, a piece of linen, muslin, or some similar stuff, in the manner of drawers. The form in which this last is worn between the legs gives it a little the appearance of breeches, that is, it covers the thighs tolerably well as low as the knees; but it slides up when they ride on horseback, and they are obliged to cover their nakedness with their robe. Their sash or girdle is sometimes exceedingly large, for they wear no pockets, but fasten every thing they have to carry round their loins.

They are always armed with a poignard; but it differs greatly from the weapon bearing that name in Europe. The blade is wide, smooth, and curved, with two ridges on the sides, commencing at the broadest part, and meeting at the point. The handle is short and sloping in the middle, so that the end answering to the pommel, extending beyond the hand, prevents the instrument from sliding, and gives a firm hold. The shape of this weapon is altogether a curve, nearly like the figure denoting a parenthesis; so that the wound which it makes, though extremely wide, is difficult to be probed, from not being straight. The Arabs generally strike downwards, or else from left to right; in the former case, the bend or curve of the poignard is below, and in the latter the point is directed inwards.

The whole dress of the Arabs is admirably adapted to the climate. Nothing can be more refreshing than their ample garments, which allow a free circulation of the air, leave all the joints of the body unrestrained, and impede none of its motions.

Mahomet had a strong partiality for the colours of green and red; and these colours have on this account been appropriated to such Arabs as are descended from him, or belong to his tribe. Those who consider themselves as his descendants assume the title of Sayd, and are greatly respected. There were three of these personages at Mocha, of whom two having incurred the displeasure of the iman, one was put into irons, and the other deprived of his place of governor: for these gentry, notwithstanding the estimation in which they are held by the people, are equally subjected with the rest of the nation to the will of the sovereign, who punishes them even less sparingly when they transgress, as indulgence in that respect would embolden and perhaps render them dangerous. In the hands of prejudice or fanaticism, the title they enjoy might be converted into a formidable instrument: it is therefore the policy of the sovereign to give them a feeling of their dependence, lest, availing themselves of the name of Mahomet, they should attempt to throw off the yoke. Their mark of distinction is a green turban, of which they are extremely jealous. They seldom wear a red one, or a red robe, green being their favourite colour, from its supposed superiority. The privilege of wearing it extends also to the principal officers of government, but only while they are in office: the governor of Mocha has a green robe and turban, while he occupies that station; but if not a Sayd, as soon as his place is taken from him, he resigns these marks of distinction, whereas the Sayds always retain them*.

* Niebuhr, p. 10, is of a different opinion as to the green turban.

The Arabs divide the day into four-and-twenty hours, as we do, beginning with six in the evening. When they purchase any of our watches, they put the hand at sunset to twelve, and as the figures on the plate are different from theirs, the handle serves as a mark to direct them in counting: so that when the hand comes round to this mark, instead of calling it twelve o'clock, as we do, they call it six. In their division of the year they reckon by lunations, and are very exact in announcing the appearance of a new moon: there is even a reward for the first who discovers it. As soon as it is perceived, a piece of ordnance is discharged at one of the batteries, and the inhabitants of the town make great rejoicings. They first go to prayers, and afterwards spend the rest of the day as a festival in their families.

At the distance of about five hundred paces from Mocha, to the south, the Jews have a camp, where they live in straw huts. They are prohibited from residing in the town, but are at liberty to do as they please in their camp, which is often riotous enough: for the Mahometans not admitting the use of strong liquors among them, the sailors can no where procure any but of the Jews, who sell them bad arrack, distilled from rice. These Jews are numerous, their population amounting to twelve or fifteen hundred. I did not observe among them a single individual who was not a complete negro: they have sleek and shining hair, and are similar in all respects to the Parias in India.

If the Jewish families of Europe, and the celebrated beauties we sometimes find among their women, are really descended from the same stock as the Jews of Mocha; if, faithful to the prejudice which forbids them from intermarrying with families of a different religion, the descent has thus been preserved strictly Jewish on each side without adulter-

ation; we have nothing to which to impute the difference I have described, but the operation of climate. Their black colour would then not be inherent in their race, but would merely be a change effected by the sun. I do not pretend to support this hypothesis by a fact of so dubious a nature as the difference of colour. On the contrary, I am convinced, that the eastern Jews must anciently have intermixed with European families, and that an ancestry of five hundred years, purely Jewish, without any alloy whatever, could not be found among them. Be this as it may, the Jews of Mocha are poor and oppressed, are the reverse of handsome, and very uncleanly. Those young females in the synagogues at Hamburg or Amsterdam, who gain an admirer by every glance, would be shocked at the idea of being compared even with the most captivating beauties among their tribe at Mocha.

Besides that of the Jews, another strange cast is tolerated here even in the town itself: these are the Bannians. Of all the variety of religions, sects, societies, and casts which exist, that of the Bannians, beyond contradiction, is the one that does most honour to humanity. In the exercise of the social virtues they have no parallel. One of their chief precepts, as is well known, is to love every thing that breathes, to assist every thing that is in pain, to abhor the spilling of blood, and to abstain from food that has enjoyed life; and they practise this precept in its utmost rigour. Nothing can induce them to take any other nourishment than milk, butter, cheese, rice, and vegetables. They are particularly tender in their treatment of all sorts of animals. Mocha abounds with dogs, which have no owners, and which live in a southern part of the town, where they are seen in packs, sleeping three-fourths of the day in small holes, which they dig them-

selves. To me nothing can be so offensive and disgusting as these animals: many of them attain to a great age, and all without exception are devoured by the mange, destitute of hair, quarrelsome, and almost famished; they bark, or set up a howl at every one who passes, and are objects of detestation to the inhabitants. They are not suffered to enter the town; and they keep therefore in one situation, where they multiply so fast, that, whatever havoc is made among them, their number seems never to diminish. The Bannians extend their compassion to these detestable animals, and even take particular care of them: they bake little loaves of bread for food, which they carry to them almost every hour in the day: one or other of this tribe is seen continually passing with a little copper pot of water in one hand, and a loaf in the other. The dogs know them, and as soon as a Bannian is perceived they hasten to him in swarms: the most eager get a few bits of bread, and others a little water, while those who get nothing wait the arrival of another Bannian, who shortly appears and dispenses in the same manner his water and loaf. Their dress is a white robe and rose-coloured turban; the different tribes of animals know them so well, that the pigeons are often extremely troublesome, and no bird ever flies away to avoid them. I have never seen a Bannian take any bird, though I have seen instances of their feeding them on the bushes; though I have seen them scatter rice at their feet, and the birds, wild to other men, flock round and tranquilly pick it up, like so many poultry in a farm-yard. In short, the most timid animals approach them without the least apprehension; and the most successful mode of hunting would certainly be in the disguise of a Bannian, were it possible so flagrantly to abuse the confidence which the amiable manners of this cast have gained them.

Their horror at every thing dead can hardly be described. One of them, named Ramji, came often to my house at the time of my meals to give an account of some business or other he had transacted for me. When any of my people wished to play him a trick, they contrived that a little broiled fish should fall as by accident upon his hand. The poor fellow upon this would cry out as in an agony, and run to wash himself with an eagerness and care, that could only be equalled by the terror he felt at the circumstance. The flies in all hot countries are eager for drink, and are very often drowned in the dishes and glasses. Ramji would willingly have spent a whole day in restoring one of these insects to life. A method was pointed out to him of putting them into salt to recover them; and he was so overjoyed at the discovery, that he never came to me afterwards without a handkerchief full of salt, to save the lives of as many as he could. These marks of character, though trifling, may serve to depict the extraordinary good-nature and sweetness of manners of these people.

Their disposition is frank and open; a Bannian is ignorant of prevarication and falsehood. The whole commerce of the Europeans is entrusted to them, they alone being able to deal with the Arabs. What they receive for their trouble is extremely moderate, yet are their probity and honour proof against every temptation. The English factor here is extremely rich; the French ones are by no means equally so, the government having occasioned them very considerable losses. Their commercial house was conducted in the names of Courji and Ramji, the first of whom had rendered such services, both to the company and the French in general, that he received from the king in acknowledgment a gold medal of the weight of six ounces, with the royal

portrait on one side, and a representation on the other, of the sun rising upon a distant country; the legend on the portrait-side was, *Louis XVI. king of France and Navarre*, and on the other, *chief of the French factors at Yemen*; and the exergue, *I will extend my benefits to the end of the world*. This medal, which was fastened to a gold chain, he wore round his neck, like the badge of an order, whenever he appeared in his habits of ceremony.

The Mussulmans have a season of solemnity and fasting similar to our Lent, which lasts through the whole month of *Ramadan*, during which they are to eat nothing before sun-set. This precept was evidently given to inculcate abstinence; but they contrive to elude, while they would be thought to observe it, by obeying the letter and neglecting the spirit of the command: for they sleep all day, and spend the night in rejoicings and merriment. During this season not an individual is to be seen in the day-time; but the sun has no sooner sunk below the horizon than the revelry begins. They traverse the streets singing, the houses are illuminated, the people assemble in large parties, and the whole town resembles a fair. I took the resolution while it lasted of retiring to my vessel for the sake of repose; for the noise in the streets, as soon as the night set in, made it impossible for me to sleep. To crown my misfortune too, I lived next door to a rigid devotee, who, in performing the duties of *Ramadan*, uttered the most frightful cries, roaring *Alla* with the voice of a stentor, and driving away slumber from every eye. His window was opposite to mine, and I could not help suspecting there was a little of the charlatan in his devotion; at least, whenever I looked towards him, he threw himself upon the ground, and redoubled his cries of *Alla*, with an extravagance, that could only be the effect

either of gross hypocrisy or the extremest fanaticism. As I could do no business, all the inhabitants being in bed, I lived on board my vessel, and did not come ashore till the last day, when the Ramadan terminated by a procession. The governor in great state, on a horse covered with armour, carries the standard of Mahomet at the head of the cavalry, preceded by the foot soldiers, and followed by the people. He sets out from the principal mosque, and goes round the town outside the ramparts, entering again the mosque, which is announced by a discharge of artillery. The Sayds walk after him, and every one displays on this occasion all the luxury that his fortune will admit, which gives to the procession an air of extraordinary grandeur and magnificence.

The Arabs pay religious homage to their dead. The burying-places are a short distance from the town, where every one that dies has a tomb, more or less conspicuous, to denote where he is interred. These tombs are much frequented by the parents or friends of the deceased, who sit upon the ground, absorbed in grief, uttering groans, affecting despair, and making the most piteous howlings. At first I respected their sorrow, and hastened to a distance, whenever by accident I found myself near to them. I observed, that their cries were loud while I was present, and that the moment I was gone these mourners were silent. I supposed, therefore, that their sufferings might be occasioned by the horror they felt at the appearance of a Christian; but my factor soon set me at ease on that point, by telling me, that it was all affectation; that their mourning in reality was an outward form, rather than a feeling of the heart; which made me afterwards less scrupulous in my conduct. These tombs are not costly; they are a heap of bricks put together,

with no ornament, and most of them without an inscription.

The Arabs are strongly attached to their religion, are intolerant to all other sects, and anxious to make profelytes. A Christian who embraces Mahometanism is sure to obtain their favour and protection, but without enjoying any great share of respect. Many Europeans have settled among them. The sailor who deserted from me at Cochin had formerly been shipwrecked in the neighbourhood of Mocha, where he was taken care of by the French consul there. During his stay in the town he had embraced the Mahometan faith, had cried *Alla*, and been circumcised. He had even married and settled himself : but taking advantage of the first vessel that arrived, he made his escape, abandoning his house, his wife, and Mahomet together. As soon as he learned at Cochin my intention of going into the Red Sea, the dread of being apprehended and impaled induced him to desert. I have mentioned how I regained him. Being thus, in spite of himself, obliged to visit his old place of residence, he told me the whole of his story, and begged me to protect him. This was easy enough ; nothing was necessary but to order the officers on duty never to send him ashore, nor put him into any of the boats, that he might not be seen and recollected. Unable however to keep his own secret, he told his companions, that he was prevented by the fear of punishment only from returning to his wife, and that he had never been more comfortable than when living among the Mussulmans. Curiosity, and still more the restless disposition of sailors, particularly those of the French nation, put it into the heads of my crew to be Mahometans also, since, as he had done, they could desert at last, if upon trial they disliked the change. The first who set the example

was a stout Caffre, an excellent failor, and who spoke the Moorish tongue well. He waited at the door of the mosque till he saw the governor, when, crying *Alla*, he was immediately seized, and the next day, being circumcised and clothed in the Arabian manner, he walked into Mocha my equal, and came to me in an insolent manner, demanding his wages. I told him that every failor by deserting forfeited his claim to whatever was due to him, that this was the law of all vessels, and that I should therefore give him nothing. I also preferred a complaint against his conduct to the new governor, who was just appointed instead of the one who had showed me so much kindness; but all the satisfaction I could obtain was to have this proselyte sent out of the way, that he might no more insult me in my own house. I desired the consul to inform the governor, that, as the failor was not a Frenchman, I should take no further notice of the affair, but that I would not advise him to take from me any more of my crew, as I should certainly find means of resenting it. A few days after, the son of the hydrographer of the Isle of France followed the example of my Caffre; he belonged to the crew of a small brig, the captain of which took no notice of the affair, though I did every thing in my power to rouse his resentment.

It was not long before I was informed that another of my failors had been at the house of the governor to cry *Alla*, and, not seeing him, was going again the next day. I watched the moment of his return to my house, and, calling him before me, I reproached him with the wish to renounce his religion and his country. I then insisted on his going instantly on board, whither I was resolved to have him conducted; and I ordered some cord to be brought to tie his hands behind him, that he might not escape. Upon this he made a gesture

as if to force the door, but seeing me armed he desisted: resolved however to desert, he threw himself out of the window. The room was on the second story, and there was at the height of the first what is called a *pandal* or shelter from the sun, made of a covering of mats, supported by poles. He thought, that by jumping upon this *pandal*, he might let himself fall from thence to the ground and so escape. He performed his first leap safely, but he had the misfortune in the second to break his leg a little above the ankle. He fell with such extraordinary violence, that the bone came through and stuck into the ground, stripping up the flesh from the fracture to the knee. When I came to the spot I was shocked at the sight. I immediately had him conveyed into a room, and we bound up his leg as well as we were able, for I had lost my surgeon: but, in spite of the care which was taken of him, a mortification ensued, and he died four days after. Shortly before his death he expressed a desire that I would see him: I did so; and he confessed to me, that the reason of his wishing to leave me was, that he was a deserter, first from the regiment of Aufrasia, and afterwards from that of the Isle of France; that seeing me, as he supposed, about to take him to his corps, he hoped by running away to escape being shot. He added, that he was sensible of his crime in consenting to change his religion, and asked forgiveness of God, the king, and his captain. I was greatly affected at the fate of this poor fellow, and begged he would die in peace. I told him, that I forgave him with all my heart, and that if he had sooner confided to me his story, this cruel event should not have happened, for I would have exchanged him with an English vessel, and he would thus have been safe. In dying he had all the succours of religion, which were administered to him by a German, who was a missionary priest.

This misfortune served to exasperate me still more against the government for encouraging desertions; but it had not the effect of stopping the phrensy which seemed to have taken possession of my people. Scarcely had three days passed, when another of the crew went in search of the governor, to ask for a turban; and, undergoing the same ceremony, was in like manner taken from me. I sent to reclaim him, and received for answer, that religion would not permit a Mussulman to be delivered into the hands of a Christian.

I immediately formed my resolution. I sent away my effects, with the proceeds of such part of my cargo as was sold. I sent my men also on board, retaining only my armed-boat. I then told M. de Moncriff, that, if he thought he should be exposed to any danger from the Arabs by staying ashore, I would with pleasure take him with me, for that I was about to give these people a lesson which they would probably for a long time remember. To the captain of the French brig I gave the same intimation, and repaired to my ship. These preparations occupied me two days, and the governor supposed the affair to be at end; but he was mistaken. As soon as I was on board, I prepared for battle; and, being ready, I sent a boat, well armed and commanded by an officer, to seize upon all the Arabs that should be found in the nearest daou. My party executed faithfully their commission, and brought me four men, of whom one was the captain. Of these, I put three in irons, and dispatched the other to the governor, to inform him, that if my sailor was not instantly given up, I would carry the three Mussulmans in my possession to the Isle of France, where I would sell them as slaves: at the same time I bent my sails, and made every preparation for departing. The first step of the governor was to seize upon my

Bannians; but it appeared by their books, that all their accompts with me were settled. His next step was to send for the French agent, who easily convinced him, that he had no concern in the matter, and no authority over me. The governor then threatened to sink my ship, but was told, that I was so well armed as to be able to silence the forts. Upon this he wished to come to a parley, and an officer of the custom-house with my two Bannians were dispatched for the purpose: I received their boat with an affectation of extraordinary precaution, pretending to be in a condition to batter the whole town.

When the officer was on deck. I gave him no time for explanation, but coming directly to the point, asked him if he had brought with him my sailor. On his answering in the negative, I ordered him to be arrested and confined in one of the cabins as a prisoner, while I sent back the Bannians, with an assurance, that I would listen to no terms till the deserter was restored to me.

After waiting two hours, and receiving no intelligence, I hoisted the top-sails and heaved the anchor apeak. I had scarcely been half an hour in this situation before my man arrived, looking ashamed and ill, being not yet recovered from his operation. He was accompanied by several Arabs, who entreated me with earnestness to pardon him, alleging every thing in his favour which zeal for their religion could suggest. I immediately released my prisoners; I also gave them some presents, which reconciled them to me, and, before they quitted the ship, I had the deserter tied to a gun, and five-and-twenty strokes with a rope's end were bestowed upon him. This lesson was of service to all: the sailors after this would not expose themselves to the risk of being delivered up if they were to desert,

and the governor had no wish on his part for a second contest with me of this nature.

It was now sun-set, and too late to go on shore that night; but I went the next day, accompanied by one of my officers. We were both armed, but had no attendants, not wishing to appear in the least apprehensive of any danger. The emir habar told me, that he was extremely glad every thing was settled, and that he hoped nothing of the kind would happen again. I was immediately conducted to the house of the governor. He was not a Sayd, but a negro of a quiet and pacific disposition. He asked me, what I would say, if, now that I was in his power, he in his turn were to make me a prisoner? I answered, that he owed it to his situation to consult justice and not power; but should he so far forget the former as to oblige me to repel force by force, his conduct might prove detrimental to the commerce of his country; that, besides, I had avengers on board my vessel, whom, in such case, I had instructed how to act. I added, that I would not suffer myself to be taken alive, and would endeavour that he himself should be the first victim of the struggle; and I produced a brace of pistols as I said this, to convince him I was on my guard. Whether he had the magnanimity to feel himself above such an attempt, or whether he despised my youth and rashness, he smiled at what I said, and merely observed, that I ought, when out of my own country, to behave with more moderation; assuring me at the same time, as to the affair in question, that I should hear no more of it. We parted in friendship, and the adventure was attended with no further consequences.

The money of Mocha consists of small pieces of copper, plated or tinned, similar in form and colour to the shilling of Holstein, and differing from it in

nothing but the impression. They are called *comassi*, or *komassi*, pronouncing the *k* with a strong guttural accent. Sixty-four of these pieces are equal to a Spanish dollar *. The other coins most in use here are the crowns and piastres of Hungary : there are also a great number of gold pagodas and sequins.

I have spoken above of a German priest who was accidentally at Mocha. He was a missionary to Abyssinia, and had lived some time there in favour with the emperor. His fellow missionary, it seems, had been guilty of some knavery, for which he was put to death ; while he had himself escaped with the bastinado on the soles of his feet. I had afterwards reason to think, that his punishment was intended as a lesson of continence. Be that as it may, he had nearly died in consequence of it, and was a long time in regaining his health. As soon as he could travel, he asked permission to repair to Mocha, to complete his recovery by aid of the Europeans residing there. This was granted him by the emperor, who was probably glad to get rid of him : and on his arrival at Mocha the consul admitted him into the French lodge. One day the whim seized him of applying himself to the study of medicine, and he had the vanity in a short time to suppose himself thoroughly skilled in every branch of the art of healing. He therefore procured drugs, and began to prescribe. He killed more than half his patients, while those who recovered extolled him as a miracle. The sick ran to him in crowds, and he became rich. At the time of my arrival he was in the height of his practice. He had changed his religious dress for a Persian robe and turban. As I had no surgeon, he offered his services to me in that capacity, and began by killing my carpenter,

* Bruce makes forty equal to a dollar, but he is mistaken : Niebuhr agrees with me, and estimates them at sixty-four.

whom by his skilful treatment he dispatched in less than a week. I stopped him however in his career, by refusing to confide to him any more of my crew, and left him to exercise his talents on the Arabs, whom he continued to poison.

His mission to Abyssinia had almost totally failed, and he was thinking of returning to Europe. He had acquired some knowledge both of the language and of the country, and he pretended, that it was perfectly easy to go from Cossire to the Nile, and thence down the river to Cairo. He frequently mentioned this plan to me, observing, that the essential point was to appear poor: that with this single precaution, and that of a Turkish dress, there was nothing to be feared, as such travellers who had seemingly nothing to lose were never attacked. He talked of this project so often, that I yielded to a desire of making a journey to Egypt, and visiting the pyramids. These are now indeed so well known, have been so accurately described by Savary and others, and there are such excellent models of them in the Museum of Natural History, belonging to the botanic garden at Paris, that they are as little spoken of as the Pont Neuf, or any other monument which is continually before our eyes. Yet was my curiosity strongly excited. I was desirous to examine myself these astonishing remains of antiquity, to compare them with the descriptions which had been given, to penetrate into their interior, and inspect them on all sides with the most scrupulous attention. I therefore listened to the project of the missionary, and we made the necessary arrangements for the excursion. I began by converting my money into bills of exchange upon Cairo, which were furnished me by my Bannians. I determined that my four best sailors should accompany me, and I undertook the care of them as far as Italy, promising

them on their arrival there a reward proportioned to the satisfaction I should derive from their services. I equipped both myself and them in a Persian habit, and armed each of them with a brace of pistols, a sabre, and a musket. I took myself such arms as I thought necessary, and the missionary did the same. I bargained for a daou to carry me to Cossire, the price of which was to be two hundred piastres. We agreed with the owners of the boat, to proceed in a direct line, by the help of my sailors, and not to coast it, as is usual in that country, by which means we should be able to perform the voyage at most in five or six days. The daou was brought along side my vessel, and I furnished it with lead-lines, compasses, a chart, a good telescope, and a quadrant. This done, I was on the point of setting out, when the French marine agent signified to me, that he could not suffer me to expose myself thus with an adventurer, who was engaged, for aught we knew, with a band of robbers, who might plunder me and my men, and share with him the booty. He added, that the king's subjects (the republic did not then exist), whom I was about to take with me, might be of service to his majesty; that I ought not, besides, but in a case of the greatest necessity, to quit the command with which I was entrusted; and that, in short, in his quality of marine agent, he should oppose my project. As he had over me no authority in such matters, I paid little regard to his opposition. But he contrived to render it effectual, by procuring the interference of the governor, to whom he represented me as a madman, about to plunge headlong into adventures, which would be attended with the most disastrous consequences, as well to myself and my companions, as to all those who should have any thing to do with us; that the obstinacy of my temper had been apparent in the

affair of the apostate sailor, on whose restitution I had so peremptorily insisted; and he concluded by entreating him to prevent my departure. The governor sent for me to his house, and after endeavouring in vain, by every means in his power, to dissuade me from my undertaking, he laid an injunction on the boats of the country not to engage with me for that or any passage whatever. At the same time, believing me rash enough to undertake it in my own boat, in spite of the dangers of the voyage, he informed me, that if I did so, he would take measures to make me, when I arrived at Cossire, repent of my folly. I was thus under the necessity of relinquishing a plan, to which I was the more attached from having long entertained the idea of it, and which I abandoned at last with the utmost reluctance. Thus ended my scheme, which I now fear I shall never find an opportunity of executing. I returned my bills of exchange for Cairo, and resumed the usual course of my business.

The government of Mocha having formerly given cause of complaint to the French company, the latter sent out a force to revenge this conduct. A body of about five hundred men were landed upon the small island of sand which forms the southern boundary of the road, who took possession of the fort. The ships which brought them anchored near the town and prepared to cannonade it. The Arabian cavalry made a sortie on the French; but the latter had taken the precaution of planting some *chevaux-de-frise*; and the Arabs, astonished at a contrivance so new to them, were thrown into confusion and routed completely. Their loss was so great, that the place surrendered. A treaty of commerce was concluded, to which the Arabs, strict observers of their word, have faithfully adhered. It was provided in this treaty, that the French should enjoy

a free trade in Yemen, paying however the imposts and duties which the sovereign fixed at that time, and which have not been altered. They were also to have the right of riding on horseback in the town, and the exclusive privilege of passing the house of the governor without being obliged to dismount. This concession appeared to the Arabs to be a point of the utmost moment, and it was not admitted till after the warmest debates, while they agreed without difficulty to an article of genuine importance, which permitted the French to use their own weights and measures in commercial transactions, disregarding those of the country. They were also allowed to establish a lodge or factory in Mocha, and another in Bethelfakih, with the privilege of hoisting their flag in those places: and it was further agreed, that both at Bethelfakih and at Mocha the French articles of merchandize should be exempted from being carried to the custom-house, and should be deposited at once in the warehouses of the lodge, where an officer of the Arabs might inspect them. This treaty, so highly advantageous to the French, has to this day been punctually observed. The good faith for which the Arabs are remarkable has prevented them in the slightest degree from infringing it: but it has served to augment their hatred to the Christians. As many of the cavalry by whom our troops were attacked were killed, the surviving relatives cherished in consequence a resentment, and have been successful in raising among the people the strongest aversion to the French*. I have myself experienced its effects, and been often exposed to personal insults. Sometimes a number of Arabs attacked me with stones, and at others, bodies of Abyssinians with sticks. One day in particular, af-

* One of the French captains was assassinated by the relations of an Arab, who died in that engagement.

sisted by one of my officers, I maintained with five of the latter a most ludicrous battle. We had made ourselves, I and my officer, each a large whip for the purpose of driving away the dogs, which followed us in crowds whenever we passed near their haunts. We were armed with these whips when some Abyssinians insulted us, and, to defend ourselves, were forced to make use of them. These weapons were new to our adversaries, and the noise of their cracking, and two or three strokes skilfully applied, sent them off howling like so many demoniacs. This adventure obliged me once more to have recourse to the governor, who, under pretence of protecting me, gave me one of his men, with a *bandoeer*, ordering him to accompany me every where, and see that I was respected. I was not so stupid as to be the dupe of this compliment. I knew that this soldier was a spy upon me, and was to report all my proceedings; but as there was nothing which I had the least interest to conceal, I was indifferent upon the subject. I had reason however to rejoice at the circumstance, for his presence often protected me from insults, which I must otherwise have endured.

Mocha is situated on a plain, reaching from the coast to the foot of the mountains, which is an extent of four leagues. The soil consists of sand, mixed with coarse gravel and small stones, which are chiefly fragments of granite. On the whole plain we find only a few wretched plants of cassia, the leaves and berries of which, as soon as they begin to spring, are devoured by the camels: these plants excepted, the plain is as destitute of vegetation as the sands of the shore.

Travelling over this plain is very disagreeable both to men and cattle, as it affords no shelter against the heat of the sun, which is burning. Wells have

been dug here and there by the Arabs, as watering-places ; and near to each of these spots is a small house inhabited by people who keep the wells in repair, and furnish travellers with water at the moderate price of a komassi. These wells, with the camels, the asses, and the dress of the inhabitants, reminded me of scenes described in certain passages of the Bible, which they very much resembled.

The water in this plain is so bad as to be hardly fit to drink. As the ground lies low, the sea still filtrates through the whole extent of the plain, so that wherever we dig we are sure to find water at no great depth ; but it is all so brackish, that by putting it into a hole two feet deep salt may easily be extracted from it. At first the water will sink into the sand ; but, if properly supplied, the sand will soon be saturated, and the rest of the process will be effected without trouble. The saline particles contained in the sandy earth, of which this soil is composed, being separated by the water, unite and sink to the bottom of the pit, where they are soon calcined by the sun.

There is no good water in the town ; all that is used is fetched from a large well at the distance nearly of half a league, where there is a considerable watering-place, constructed for the cavalry : horses, mules, asses, every morning and evening, come to this place to drink. The inhabitants are obliged to partake of this water, which is brought in leather bottles to the town on the backs either of men or asses. It is bad enough even when the bottles are old and seasoned, but when they are new it is perfectly detestable. It is unwholesome too, and frequently occasions inflammation in the bowels, a disorder which in hot climates is mortal. In proportion to the distance from the sea the water is less brackish, and in the mountains it is excellent.

Towards the south of the town, nature has left a strip of vegetative earth, about half a league broad, and from three to four leagues long. It is covered with date-trees, among which some gardens are formed, and pleasure-houses erected, if we may call by this name huts of straw, and paltry buildings covered with palm-leaves. They however answer the purpose for which they were intended, affording a shelter from the injuries of the weather, and permitting the owners to enjoy the cool air, and smoke their hooka.

On this spot was the garden of the Sayd, Mohamed Abdala, the ex-governor, who had treated me with so much kindness, and I often visited him there after he was deprived of his office. The iman, when he degraded him, laid him under a heavy contribution for the soldiers, who took possession of his house, and loaded with insults the very man whom two days before they had implicitly obeyed. His friends assisted him in his distress, and he discharged the demands that were made upon him at the expense of nearly his whole fortune. After this event, he retired wholly to his garden, where he passed his days lolling on cushions or in the bath, smoking or asleep under some shade, sunk in the most complete apathy. My visits always gave him pleasure; I smoked familiarly the hooka with him, and we often fell asleep together, reclining on our separate pile of cushions. When I awoke an excellent pilaw was sure to be before me, of which he in no instance partook, as he would never eat in my presence. He detained me as long as he was able, never suffering me to go till I had merely time, by trotting my afs fast, to get to the town before the gates were shut. There was a door indeed left open for passengers nearly the whole night, but it was so extremely low, that it was necessary to creep upon the ground to get through, which obliged me always to return a little after sun-set.

This large plantation of date-trees is the only spot of ground that is cultivated in the neighbourhood of Mocha. The Arabs take great care of it, water it regularly, match the different sexes of the plants, and gather vast quantities of dates, exporting what they do not consume. This is the only species of palm which I observed in Arabia: they have, however, the *vaquois*, though I did not see any; nor did I see any cocoa-trees.

It is with great impropriety that the name of Mocha is given to a particular kind of coffee, as there is not a plant of this sort growing in the neighbourhood of the town: it owes its appellation solely to the circumstance of being shipped at that port. There is in Arabia a tree called *marshb*, and another called *ofchar*, of which the wood has the same quality as that denominated in our colonies *roundwood*—of readily catching fire by friction.

When we have cleared the plain on which the town is situated, we arrive at the mountains, where is the village of Moza or Muza. The appearance of the country is here totally different. The village is in a pleasant valley, and is surrounded with a perpetual verdure. The mountains shelter it from the tempestuous winds to which the town is exposed, and the air is perfumed with the fragrance both of flowers and fruits. The inhabitants enjoy a cool shade under the palm, peach, badamier, and other trees with which the mountains abound. The water is excellent, and I used to have it brought from this place every day for my use: in short, Moza is sufficient of itself to obtain for the province of Yemen the appellation of Arabia Felix.

This country does not possess a single carriage of any description whatever: the use of wheels is unknown: every thing is carried on the backs of men, mules, asses, or camels. This last animal is a na-

tive of Arabia, and will neither thrive nor propagate any where else : none of those which are in India breed there, or at least the instances are rare. It is the most valuable of all the animals in this province, and is in every respect adapted by nature to live in deserts, as it is singularly temperate. Its reserve of water, by which it can live for several days without drinking, is well known. It is known too to be of the species of ruminating animals ; but how long it will endure hunger, without perishing, has perhaps never been ascertained. I had one on board my vessel, which did not drink during the whole passage from Socotara to Pondicherry, which was seventeen days ; nor did it eat in that time more than twenty pounds of millet straw. After the fourth day it seemed to ruminate but little, about a quarter of an hour a day, as nearly as I could observe. As soon as it was landed, it ran to a spring and drank plentifully ; and it appeared in as good condition as if it had suffered no want. Though its thirst was great, its desire of food was by no means so. It still ate moderately, and with no more eagerness than usual. The camel is extremely indolent, unless harsh means are taken with it. It will often lie down upon its belly, and would continue for days together in this posture without rising even to eat, till almost famished. A rope of twisted straw is put into their mouths to raise them from the ground. It is remarkable, that, living as it does entirely on vegetable food, the breath of this animal should stink ; but, from a putrid odour contracted in the stomach, it is so very offensive as to be almost intolerable*.

Another singularity of this animal is its aversion to all sorts of dirt, which is so great that it cannot be

* It is the same in almost all desert countries, where cattle have nothing but plants of an alkaline or saline nature to live upon.

made to travel a muddy road unless driven by blows. Its foot is soft and sure; it never makes a false step, and never slips. It is said, that camels are unable to run, and that dromedaries therefore are obliged to be employed in journeys that require expedition. On the contrary, I can affirm with truth, that they are extremely nimble in their paces. I have rode many of them: their trot is extremely rough but quick; they are indeed not easily made to gallop, but when they do, it is with a swiftness exceeding the best race-horse in England. They move with such vigour, that the rider could not keep his seat, but for a long wooden pin, that goes through the bow of the saddle and passes over his thighs, to prevent him from being jolted; without this contrivance he must inevitably fall the first instant of a gallop. The camel lies down on his belly to be loaded, and gets voluntarily up again when it finds itself burdened too heavily, or beyond the usual weight. In the same manner it lies down to be mounted, and does not get up till it is told. The rider must be careful when it rises to keep a firm hold, for the motion is violent, and seldom fails to dismount those who are not accustomed to it. A camel carries in general two bales of coffee, weighing six hundred and twenty-six pounds; with the pack-saddle and furniture the weight is full seven hundred: this is the extent of its burden, and is never exceeded. The camel is led by means of a ring put through its nostrils, or one of its upper lips*. This method alone, however, is not sufficient; for the camel is so stubborn in its temper that blows must be added to render it tractable.

Arabia is the country for asses, of which there are two sorts; one common, like those in Europe,

* The upper lip of the camel is divided, so that it has two.

and another more scarce. The latter are of the size of a large horse, and are very strong and swift: they are much used for riding, and are employed by the Arabs in the cavalry, and indeed on all occasions except those of ceremony. One of these asses, with his ears and tail cut, has the appearance of a handsome rat-tailed horse: when crossed with Arabian mares they breed the finest and largest mules in the world. They surpass the horse in strength, and are monstrous as to size: the iman never sells them for less than a thousand piastres a-head, a price greater than that of horses, which are scarcely ever valued at more than eight hundred.

The Arabs are extremely curious in antelopes, and have a very handsome sort which they rear in their houses. They become domestic, and are models of agility and gratefulness. They are so familiar as to be troublesome. They leap in general by three springs, of which the second is the longest, and all their feet rise and come to the ground together. They are in height from thirteen to fifteen inches, and can leap six or seven feet. Their coat is grey, with a silvery belly; and their horns, which are straight, are of a shining black, and never longer than two inches. These animals also are remarkable for their temperateness; a quality which the penuriousness of the climate certainly renders necessary, but which they do not lose when removed elsewhere: it is incredible on how little nourishment they will subsist, and preserve themselves in good condition.

I mentioned above, that the Arabs have arrived at no great skill in the arts. Their religion, which forbids the use of images, deprives them both of painting and sculpture. Their architecture is rude, and seems to be formed on no regular system. Our five orders are unknown to them. Their prin-

cipal buildings have a considerable resemblance to the Gothic style; at least the arches of the great mosque at Mocha are Gothic; those of the roof *ogee*, and supported by pillars which appeared to be of the same order.

The mode of constructing their houses consists in raising four brick walls with no plan, no design, and no taste. In placing the windows not the smallest attention is paid to symmetry, and the walls are crowded on the inside with little niches, which at first sight a catholic would suppose were intended to contain images of saints, but which are made to hold the lights at night, or else to show away goods. Their mortar is made of shells and coral, but it costs them dear, as the coral is brought from a great distance. The roofs of their houses are made in the *argamasse* manner, and are terminated by little triangular steps, close to each other.

The navigation of the Arabs is confined to a timid coasting along the shore. Their music is so barbarous as to be even a thousand times worse than that of the savages of Africa. We have seen what is their knowledge of medicine, in the instance of the missionary I have mentioned; and the testimony of Savary, Bruce, Niebuhr, and Volney, confirms my assertions.

They are altogether ignorant of mechanics, and have no wheel carriage of any kind; every thing is done by the mere strength of the arms; even a cart is not known among them. Their plough is a wretched instrument without wheels, the share of which works nearly like ours, but the toil is great both for the cattle and men. The cultivation of the land in almost all its branches is a business of bodily labour. By means of a plank, with a rope fastened at each end, they heap up the earth, and make little banks of it, to retain the water, as in the fields

prepared for rice ; they then break up the ground either with their ploughs or with pick-axes, the sower following close to the labourer, and scattering the seed, which the latter, as he returns, treads in with his feet. In spite of so imperfect a method they have excellent crops. The wheat in the worst soil yields ten for one, in the ordinary twenty-five or thirty, and in the best, in some places, fifty, particularly among the mountains. The millet is still more productive, and affords even a hundred and fifty for one ; a proportion that is almost incredible.

While many arts are wholly unknown in this country, others are in their infancy. But with literature and the sciences it is different. The excellence of their poetry is well known ; and as for the sciences, the Arabs are as well skilled in geometry and astronomy as it is possible to be without the aid of instruments, or with the imperfect ones they possess. Their genius is particularly adapted to numerical operations ; they are good arithmeticians, and play well at chess. This game drew many of them to my house, of whom one in particular was so expert that he beat us all, and for that reason was called *sap-mate*, and at last known by no other appellation : his friends grew so accustomed to it, and used it so constantly, that it remained with him. *Sap* is a Moorish word of distinction, answering to *sir* : to express respect to a woman, they say *bibi-sap*.

Horned cattle are so scarce in Arabia that there are very few killed ; and as a want of the flesh of these animals often prevails at Mocha, camels' flesh is substituted in its stead, which the butchers sell in the shambles like beef. This meat is agreeable and nourishing, but rather resembles veal than beef. The soup made of it is excellent ; I was so extreme-

ly fond of it, that I never complained when my landlord apologized for being able to procure me no other.

Fish is the principal dish in places near the shore ; it is in general plentiful and good, and of the same kind as ours : there are no fish, nor any birds, of passage. I saw neither storks nor swallows. Storks however were seen by Niebuhr at Moful. There are quails, but they are stationary. The *samargog* or locust-eater is found here : I met myself with none of these birds ; but, from the description which was given me, I suppose them to be of the species of blackbird, known in the Isle of France by the name of *martin*.

The fruit-market here is perhaps the most extraordinary in the world. Nature has done every thing for this country ; and when we consider the numberless advantages she has bestowed upon it, the strength, the talents, and courage of its inhabitants, it is difficult to account for their not having become the greatest nation on earth ; unless we suppose, that, possessing in themselves every thing to be wished for, they have never attempted the conquest of countries that offered no attractions, and did not enjoy half the advantages with which their own country abounded. Arabia produces every thing. I have seen the market-place filled with apples and oranges, plums and citrons, apricots and pines, peaches and bananas, brets and artichokes, grapes and mangoes ; in short, with all the fruits and vegetables of Europe and Asia : but the heat is so excessive, that annual fruits ripen too quickly, have little juice, and decay in a fortnight : those of the evergreen-trees, on the contrary, succeed well ; and the fruits of Asia are accordingly in this part of the world much superior to those of Europe.

Their religion prohibiting the use of fermented

liquors, the Arabs make no wine, nor even extract any liquor from the date, which would supply it; as well as the cocoa-nut; but they dry a great quantity of grapes, from which a drink peculiar to the country is made, and which is tolerably pleasant. For want of other wine I was obliged to make use of it. It is produced thus:—thirty pounds of dried raisins are put into a hoghead of water, and left for three days to ferment, when the liquor is racked off and put into bottles. It very much resembles champagne. The Arabs partake of it in spite of the koran, every one having an opportunity of making it privately in his own house, and I was often asked in secret to drink with them. Their fondness for brandy also is but little checked by the prohibitory commandment, the great resort of foreigners to Mocha rendering them less scrupulous there in points of religion. They often indulge their inclination; and though they do not suppose Mahomet to be blind, will drink it with delight, when they are certain of not being observed by their countrymen. It was perhaps to their love of strong liquors, more than to any thing else, that I was indebted for my acquaintance with many of the most distinguished persons in the cavalry, who visited me with the hope of secretly indulging their passion. The Jews make some arrack from rice, but it is so badly distilled, that none but negroes or sailors can drink it. The Arabs, independently of the dictates of religion, wholly abstain from it; so that the consumption of this liquor is extremely moderate.

Millet is the grain which is cultivated by preference in the province of Yemen, where there is little barley and still less wheat. The millet grows amazingly strong; the ear, which is seldom less than five inches long, and an inch thick, is abundantly loaded, yielding, as I observed before, in the proportion

of a hundred and fifty for one : the stalks altogether are sometimes from five to six feet high. The straw is very valuable, serving as food for the asses and camels. As there is no hay for the horses, the tenderest end of the millet stalks, with the grain in the ear, is given them : this serves also, with a small portion of barley or beans, instead of oats.

The Arabs make little or no bread ; but consume, like the Indians, a great quantity of rice. Their usual delicacy is the pilaw. This is made by putting a fowl into an earthen pan, with about three pounds of rice, and just enough water to keep it from burning ; the whole is left to stew for six-and-thirty hours, a quantity of spice, such as cardamoms, cloves, and nutmegs, being added : the gravy of the fowl moistens the rice, and makes it delicious. The smell of a good pilaw, if uncovered on the fire, would scent a whole house.

The interior part of the country so abounds with rose-trees, that a vast quantity both of rose-water and oil of roses is made, and is exported to every part of the globe. The Arabs are very fond of this perfume, and use a great deal of it. The oil in particular is so strong, that a single drop poured into a chest will give it a scent which nothing can overcome : a box also, in which a bottle of this perfume has been kept, will retain the smell as long as a fragment of it remains ; and if the hand by accident or otherwise should touch it, a perspiration of three days' continuance will scarcely suffice to take off the odour.

A great deal of salt is made on the shore of the sea : but the Arabs do not, as is done in Europe, divide a plain covered with water into compartments. They make a number of uniform holes about four and sometimes five feet wide, and two feet deep, which they fill with sea-water till the

ground is soaked, so as to absorb no more. A red crust then forms itself on the surface: the water, which is also red, is afterwards drained off, and the sediment exposed to the sun, which gives it a beautiful whiteness. The salt of Mocha is the finest I have any where seen.

The lovers of shell-work would find ample room for gratifying their taste on the shores of Arabia, where, as to these objects, curiosity has not yet roamed, and where there are shells therefore in abundance. The most common are the olive, the pilgrim, and Bernard the hermit. There are some in high preservation both as to form and polish.

The principal object of cultivation in Yemen is coffee. This tree is too well known to require a description. It is a native of Arabia, and though it has thriven surprisngly in the Antilles, at Cayenne, and in the Isle of Bourbon, it has preserved in its original country a superiority that gives it a preference in all the markets of Europe. The fruit, when stripped of its skin, is commonly small and round: it is of a green colour, and has a strong scent. There is another sort growing in the neighbourhood of Ouden, that is black and full of small shining particles like cloves. This has a strong as well as greasy taste, and the infusion made from it is extremely oily. So powerful indeed is its odour, and so sharp its taste, that it cannot be used by itself; but when mixed with the other, it is very agreeable. The usual proportion is one pound to six: it is thus that the company's agent mixes it.

The coffee is all carried to Bethelsakih, a small town about five-and-twenty leagues north-west of Mocha, where the general market is held. The French have a lodge there, and are allowed to use the standard weights of France. The annual period for the market is the beginning of May, that the

vessels, which load at Mocha, may begin their voyage early in June, when the monsoon changes. The coffee intended to be shipped is conveyed to Mocha on camels. The exportation seldom amounts to four thousand bales a year, except when the English and French companies have made expeditions there; but these occasions happening seldom, the exportation may be taken at an average of from three thousand five hundred to four thousand bales. A bale weighs three hundred and thirteen pounds, of which the thirteen pounds are allowed for the packing. The common market-price of a bale is forty-two Spanish piastres, the duties at Bethelfakih and Mocha, with the expense of carriage to the latter place, included; which is at the rate of about fourteen pence halfpenny per pound. By this calculation the trade of Mocha will amount, in the article of coffee, to twelve hundred thousand weight, producing a sum of a hundred and sixty-eight thousand piastres. As the Arabs have recourse to foreign countries for many articles of necessity, the balance of trade would be very much against them, if their receipts were confined to a small sum; but the exports from Mocha are of so little importance to them as hardly to draw the attention of the government. The Persians flock to the market of Bethelfakih, and form there the caravan of Bassora. The coffee, which is distributed through Natolia, Turkey in Europe, and part of Russia, goes by the way of Smyrna, and joins the caravan of that name, while that which is intended for the coast of Barbary, and for Africa in general, joins the caravan of Cairo. These three caravans are the principal support of the market of Bethelfakih. The purchases are all made in money, which introduces annually into the province of Yemen a sum greater than it expends in such articles of consumption as it is obliged to import.

Besides coffee, Arabia supplies other nations with great quantities of fruits, such as pears, apples, raisins, figs, peaches, and dried dates, as well as with cassia, cardamoms, and *assa-fœtida*, which are all productions of its own soil, but of which the value may be considered as trifling in the balance of trade. Its markets furnish likewise incense, benzoin, aloes, and gum. These last articles, however, are not of its own growth, though the principal market is there, for Arabia itself produces but a very small quantity of them. The aloes come from Socotara, which furnishes the best that are known. This commodity is not confined to any particular market, but may be had equally at Mocha, Muscat, Jeddo, and the other towns of Arabia.

Yemen has its gum chiefly from Abyssinia, for it does not produce itself the twentieth part of what is sold in its markets. It is therefore by no means proper to say Mocha coffee, and gum-arabic. The gum-tree of Arabia is a little, short, stunted plant, and the drops of gum which it yields are small and yellowish. The Abyssinian gum-tree, on the contrary, is large and flourishing, and produces drops in abundance, as large as a pigeon's egg, and as transparent as crystal. The market of Mocha and the places near it scarcely furnish three hundred bales of this article annually. As for the incense and benzoin, they form together but an inconsiderable branch of commerce. The Arabs consume indeed great quantities of them, but they are chiefly supplied by the Abyssinians; and I think it a just calculation to estimate the profit upon what they sell to strangers, as only equivalent to the sum they pay for what they get from Abyssinia; so that the state derives from these articles no advantage.

The sums which this province receives for the productions I have mentioned serve to pay for the

rice which it obtains from India, the sugar from different places, the sugar-candy from Bengal in particular, the iron and cannon from Europe, the cloths and wrought gold by the ports of the Levant, the pepper and different species from the coast of Malabar, the cotton manufactures of every kind from India, silks from Surat, and porcelain and other articles from China.

Though the wants of this country are so extensive, the balance of trade is still in its favour. This will be evident if we consider, that all the business is done by ready money ; for though the country possesses no coin of its own, except a small kind called komassi, of which I have spoken, and which cannot be exported on account of its trivial value, yet it abounds with foreign money of every sort, and particularly European, such as the crown-pieces and sequins of Hungary, which serve for all commercial transactions however considerable. The komassis are used only in inferior concerns, that the coins I have mentioned may remain in circulation in Arabia. The amount of its sales therefore must necessarily exceed that of its purchases, for the latter would otherwise leave no residue of foreign money ; and Arabia must undoubtedly be considered as a rich country, since its productions exceed its wants.

The manners of the Arabs are mild. The custom of living alone in their seraglios, and consequently of having but little intercourse with each other, their plurality of wives, by which they are enabled to gratify a propensity which the climate creates, and the state of subjection, or rather slavery in which the sex is held, are circumstances unfavourable to licentiousness : while, at the same time, the precept enjoining abstinence from strong liquors being strictly observed, except in those places where the luxury introduced by commerce leads to a neg-

lect of the most important duties, their ignorance of all games of chance, and above all their enthusiasm for their religion, and the despotic influence which its ministers possess, contribute to preserve the purity of their morals. The contempt also which they entertain for foreigners prevents their inviting them to their houses, or having any communication with them. An Arab knows nobody but his family : he faithfully observes the laws of the koran, and the employment of every hour of the day is determined by a precept. The duties of devotion, ablutions, and the concerns of his house, uniformly occupy his time, and his life passes away in a regularity that preserves his manners from corruption. The children, brought up under the eye of their father, and perverted by no intercourse with strangers, adopt the same system of conduct, and seldom or never depart from it.

The government is avaricious, but the people individually are not so. This fatal passion, which every where else is the parent of so many vices, has not yet found access with the Arabs. The heat of the climate renders their wants few in the article of clothing, and their habitual temperance prescribes the same moderation in their living. In peaceful indolence in the midst of his mountains, the Arab has nothing to wish for : he is happy in the benefits which nature has bestowed upon him, and does not sigh for those of which he is ignorant, and which foreigners can never make known to him in his solitude. His highest pleasure is to have nothing to do. To sleep in a cool situation, to throw himself upon piles of cushions, to imbibe the free air, smoke his hooka, bathe frequently, as well from devotion as inclination, and enjoy the society of his women, constitute the summit of his felicity, and of any a-bove this he has no conception. At the same time:

that these enjoyments satisfy him, he knows how to value them, and admits in his pleasures of no partner : hence that jealousy which forms so principal a part of his character.

If any thing could introduce a relaxation of manners among the Arabs, it would be their mode of living with their women : the burning heat of the climate, affecting their external senses, acts as a perpetual stimulus to their desires, to which they give themselves up with the less reserve from possessing so amply the means of satisfying them. It was with the view probably of moderating the violence of these feelings, that frequent bathings were prescribed by their religion ; but, instead of producing that effect, nothing so much tends to augment them, as the abuse which is made of this practice. The places provided for the purpose are in general from five-and-twenty to thirty feet square, and about three feet and a half in depth, with little steps at the corners to go down. The bottom is sand, or gravel beaten firm, and is always smooth. The master of the family and his women all bathe there together. Over every thing in this picture that may be deemed obscene, I shall draw a veil : it may, however, easily be conceived, that the sight of so many females, with no covering but a transparent water, must necessarily add to the effects produced by the natural heat of the climate.

In this point of view the manners of the Arabs may be said perhaps to be somewhat licentious ; but the legislator, subject probably to the same wants himself, justly conceiving the impossibility of repressing desires so violent, and the danger of attempting it by a precept, has imposed no restriction. Accordingly, the voluptuous Arab may freely abandon himself to the empire of sensual pleasure in the privacy of his seraglio, without being judged depraved

in his manners ; for in doing so, he violates no law, and deviates from no duty.

The women in Arabia are never exposed to view, even when they travel, though carriages are not in use there. To screen them from public observation, a large packfaddle is placed upon the back of a camel, having four upright posts, with cloth, fastened to it, and a roof in the manner of a canopy. The woman who travels is shut up in this kind of cage, and performs the intended journey without enjoying a single view of the country through which she is passing. To lift up a corner of the covering which conceals her, would often endanger her life : this depends however upon the character of the husband or master.

In consequence of this seclusion of the women, debauchery is unknown even in those towns where the manners have been most relaxed by luxury. There are no women of pleasure at Mocha, which is often, by the European sailors, deemed a great hardship. One female only, who sold baskets, was thought not to be very cruel to her suitors ; but the laws of the country are terrible against the man who should be caught in so flagitious an act : if the government were to come to the knowledge of it, the offender must take the turban, or he would be put to death. In such moments of dalliance if the woman were desirous of betraying her lover, she has only to call out, and, if observed by a single witness, the European would be seized, and could save his life only by embracing Mahometanism. In addition to this perfidy, were she to swear, that, to obtain his purpose, he had cried *Alla*, the crime would be still heavier, and a refusal to take the turban would conduct him without further examination to the punishment of impaling.

These laws are so well known, that the Europe-

ans are on their guard ; and the Arabs on their part having no need of such women, the purity of their manners is preserved. From its still possessing a religion and manners, this nation may be regarded as in its infancy. By religion I do not mean a form of worship, which in reality every nation observes, but which is very different from religion. By having a religion, whatever may be its nature, I mean the firm conviction of the mind as to the truth of its doctrines, the strict observance of its precepts, the persuasion that it is of divine origin, that it cannot err, and the being ready, if necessary, to die for its sake. In this sense we certainly have no longer a religion in Europe. A form of worship, on the contrary, is merely the professed observance of certain exterior practices, which are often dispensed with on the most frivolous pretences, or discharged with a carelessness, which is made subservient to luxury and fashion. We have long had nothing but forms of worship in the part of the world we inhabit.

Arabia must be considered as more distant than any other country from a revolution, because, while she preserves her religion and manners, she stands in no need of a general reformation. The greatest misfortune a country can sustain is to lose these ; and in the history of the world we shall find, that, after religion and manners have been annihilated, a nation could never be regenerated, without a period of barbarism, throwing every thing into a chaos out of which more enlightened times would gradually arise. The arts and sciences are then re-produced, and the people raised to the height of civilization, when they again degrade themselves. The sciences, which were first cultivated in India, afterwards escaped to Egypt, and thence to Greece, whence they passed into Italy, which has lost them in her

turn, while France has obtained the prize : they now seem to be taking their course towards the north, which scarcely possessed the slightest degree of civilization when the south was most flourishing. They will thus return perhaps again to their primitive country. History shows us, that the succession of barbarism to more enlightened times, in the countries which we have just named, only compelled the arts and sciences to make the tour of the globe ; and, in inquiring into the causes of their decline, we are obliged to admit, that the revolutions which overturn states are brought about solely by the extinction of religion and morals.

In the enjoyment of a happier destiny, Arabia, instead of apprehensions of revolution, sees the period approaching when she will occupy in her turn the foremost place among the nations of the earth. Her attachment to her religion subsists in all its force ; her morals are uncontaminated ; she knows neither debauchery, gaming, luxury, nor avarice, and is perhaps the only country in existence where virtue is practised for its own sake.

The strictness of manners of the Arabs must necessarily influence the national character : accordingly no people are more frank, open, and sincere : even the wandering tribes are never known to break their word. The Arab gives no note nor written obligation ; neither bond nor security is necessary to bind him to the performance of what he has promised. Two merchants conclude a bargain without speaking a word ; the one touches the hand of the other, and a third spreads a carpet over them ; the touching of hands determines the price that is agreed upon, and nothing can break an engagement entered into in this manner. If several deal together they sit down in a circle ; the seller sets his price by squeezing the hand of his neighbour on his

right side a certain number of times ; and such as intend to offer a greater or less price for the goods, augment or diminish the number of these tokens accordingly. The person on the left of the seller signifies the price which has thus come round to him ; he who first gave it makes himself known, the buyer and seller give each other the hand which a third party separates with a slight blow, and the bargain is so firmly concluded, that it cannot be broken. I have witnessed transactions of this nature. It is an established rule, that a vessel shall not dispose of any of her goods without giving notice to the body of merchants, who are entitled to the preference : the owner is obliged to resign at least a part of his cargo, if he does not sell it all to them, before he disposes of it partially. On such occasions they assemble together and treat in silence, the hand under the carpet : the bargain is concluded without any dispute, any ill-will, and without even a word being spoken, and the engagement is irrevocable.

Such good faith and honesty ought to confound our Europeans, who deem themselves superior to all other nations, yet can settle no business, however trivial, without guarding against the possibility of mutual fraud, by a multitude of forms, dictated by mistrust, and which are often insufficient to protect the creditor from the dishonest practices of the debtor.

The Arab is passionate and vindictive. Nothing can stifle his desire of revenge : he will readily sacrifice himself, if he can involve his enemy in his destruction ; but this thirst for vengeance never leads him to employ means that are treacherous. He is brave, and does not conceal his designs. The violence of his passions renders him peculiarly susceptible of enthusiasm ; and the Arabs have given

proofs of what they will do for their religion. In friendship they are firm, generous, and capable of the most perfect devotion. Hospitality is one of their most inviolable duties; whatever may be the crime of him who begs an asylum, he is sacred to his host, who protects him as long as he is under his roof, and, though it were his bitterest enemy, would defer his revenge till he had quitted his house.

The Arabs are proud, conceited, and seldom of a prepossessing deportment: they have besides a most sovereign contempt for all other nations. The converts to Mahometanism are never treated by them with any distinguished respect, of whatever utility they may be to them. They not merely despise foreigners, they perfectly detest them; and the common people frequently load them with abuse and other ill usage: but here, as every where else, the better sort are distinguished by a decency and dignity of behaviour. The higher ranks are in general extremely grave. The ruling passion of the whole nation is jealousy. Every man is capable of sacrificing his wife on the slightest suspicion: his fury would not stop there; he would not be deterred by any difficulty or distance, but would follow his rival to the end of the world to stab him. This disposition renders them extremely vigilant in whatever relates to their seraglios, from which every person is indiscriminately excluded. Even their own children, after they attain the age of puberty, are not admitted.

The iman of Yemen resides at Sana, a town about forty leagues north-north-east of Mocha. His court is far from being so brilliant as it might be, if he would encourage the Sayds about his person; but whether he fears them, or dislikes their presence, he keeps them at a distance, and is surround-

ed only by blacks, who are in entire submission to his will. There are very few Arabs of distinguished family at Sana, and the town itself is but little superior to Mocha. Its fortifications, like those of the other towns, consists merely of brick walls, flanked by huge towers without a ditch : there is not indeed a single intrenchment in the whole kingdom.

The throne of Yemen, has been frequently stained with blood, and from these occasions a sort of constitution arose, by which the power of the iman was in some degree abridged ; but, though not considered as sovereignly despotic, he becomes so by the manner in which he contrives to have his council composed, without whose advice he can undertake nothing. He thus eludes the restrictions which the constitution has imposed upon his personal authority, and is in reality absolute over the lives of his subjects. The present reigning monarch has not sullied the period of his reign by any atrocious executions, and is not charged with having put a single individual to death in an arbitrary way. He readily admits Europeans to visit him, but they never do it without carrying presents. When a European arrives at his court, the iman defrays the expenses of his coming, his stay, and his return. Among the presents intended for the sovereign, care must be taken that there is no article of sculpture or embroidery representing the figures of men or animals : every kind of image is so strictly prohibited by law, that nothing of this nature would be accepted. The presents may consist of pieces of green or red velvet, lawn embroidered with gold, jewels, a poignard mounted with precious stones, clocks, watches, and arms. In return, he generally gives the choice of a horse from his stables. Considering the extent of his dominions, he keeps his army at a strong peace establish-

ment. It may amount to two thousand cavalry, composed of the flower of the nation, and six or seven thousand indifferent infantry, which I have already described. In war he can augment his forces, cavalry and infantry, to twenty thousand and upwards. There is besides a corps of about six hundred artillery of different nations, to manage at least as many pieces of cannon of all sizes, of which not more than twenty are mounted, and these are upon naval carriages, in bad condition, and are drawn by men. The rest being dismounted are of no use. I am speaking of field-pieces, for those belonging to the fortifications are mounted upon two blocks of wood, which serve as a carriage. Their infantry and artillery are so wretched, that three thousand good European troops, with ten pieces of flying artillery, might effect the conquest of Yemen in three months.

Arabia without doubt can boast of having been peopled at as remote a period as any part of the globe. The high mountains of granite prove the antiquity of the country. At the first view of it in a map it appears to have been an island in the primitive ages of the world, before the existence of the Isthmus of Suez, and when the Persian Gulf joined the Caspian Sea. Since that time its extent has continually increased; and in the lapse of some centuries, the Straits of Babelmandel will probably be a second point of contact between Africa and Asia. There is already but seven fathom water between the Isthmus of Mehun or Perim*, which is the usual passage of vessels. There is a depth indeed of four-and-twenty fathoms in the wider passage, but this depth is confined to the middle only, and is found no where else; in many parts, the sands and

* This island stands at the distance of a short league from Cape Babelmandel, and forms the straits of that name.

the high bottoms prevent large vessels from passing. The Red Sea is deeper than the narrow strait, and is almost every where, between the islands and rocks which it contains, thirty or forty fathom. Many parts of it are even said to be unfathomable; but this must be owing to the imperfection of the lines used in sounding; and, I am persuaded, that hereafter it will be a large lake like the Caspian Sea, when time shall have shut up the strait. The Red Sea has in general been very incorrectly sounded: in tacking between Mocha and the coast of Africa, I have found constantly from seventy to eighty fathom. M. de Rosily, commander of the king's frigate *Medusa*, is the only person who would have been able to give accurate soundings of these parts, if the urgency of the service in which he was employed had allowed him to confine his attention to this object. But he was often obliged to sound when sailing before the wind, for the winds and tides are so violent in these latitudes, that if he had stood across to do so, every time of heaving the lead would have cost him as much distance as he could have gained in six hours. This method obliged him to use a very short line, so that he seldom let out more than fifty fathom, which were not sufficient to reach the bottom. This is not the case however with his observations, which are made with all the accuracy and justness which his abilities were capable of, and are therefore perfect in every respect. This excellent officer has lately published a chart of the Red Sea from the straits to the Isthmus of Suez. His astronomical observations were made with a chronometer, regulated on the meridian of Mahé; and from the care he has bestowed upon the subject, and his zeal and knowledge united, the greatest confidence may be placed in the correctness of the positions which he lays

down. This chart is essentially necessary in navigation : those of former travellers are too defective in precision to be depended upon : one was wanted from a mariner possessing the skill of M. de Rosily. Both the public and government owe him on this account a just tribute of acknowledgment.

The sea is visibly retiring from the plain on which Mocha is built. All along the coast of the Red Sea, from the entrance of the straits, the space from the shore to the foot of the mountains of Arabia is daily increasing in extent, and submerging from the ocean : it is not yet covered with vegetative earth, and the sea appears to have left it but yesterday. In many places we seem to be on sand just abandoned, and almost fear the return of the tide. It is not thus beyond the straits, on the side of Aden, where the waves bathe the foot of the mountains, while the base upon which they stand is still in the abyss. At a very short distance the depth cannot be fathomed, except near Cape Saint Anthony, from which it decreases gradually to the straits.

In attempting to calculate the ages that might elapse before the ocean will have quitted the coast of Arabia opposite Aden, the powers of the mind would be lost : while, as to the Red Sea, its water is so shallow, the islands and sand-banks with which it abounds are so evidently the tops of hills that are slowly appearing, and its retreat is so visible, that we cannot refuse to anticipate in imagination a period at which this vast gulf will be converted into a valley. It is even possible, that this change may be accelerated by some volcanic explosion. The enormous mass which constitutes the mountains of Arabia rests upon no solid basis. An internal conflagration has excavated beneath their foundations immense caverns, which, passing under the bed of the Red Sea, communicate with Africa.

The little island of Gebelthor still burns and smokes, from the effects of these volcanic processes.

Zeila and Mocha, two towns on opposite coasts, are built upon correspondent submarine veins of this description. The pyrites contained within them continually burn, and have set fire to the combustible substances that have been placed near them. When one of these towns experiences a shock, the other feels it at the same instant. During my residence in Arabia, there were several earthquakes, of which some were violent. On one of these occasions, a little town in the mountains, six leagues to the east of Mocha, was completely overthrown. The shocks were felt at Mocha; and though not very strong, they were sufficiently so to make me apprehend, that the house in which I lived would tumble upon my head. I accordingly quitted it in haste: the land when I got out was firm, but my boat, which was at anchor on the water's edge, was still in vibration, and for a moment two or three strong waves were raised, though it was a profound calm. Fahrenheit's thermometer was at 100, and the barometers at 27. If we may judge of the depth of the subterraneous abyss under the foundations of Arabia by its effects, we must suppose it to be enormous; for enormous must be the conflagration necessary to produce an explosion capable of moving such vast masses. Earthquakes are of frequent occurrence in the mountains, particularly in the neighbourhood of Aden. The internal fire appears to be general, as it has not yet settled at any focus; it is probable, however, that it will in time make itself a passage by opening a volcano, which will give vent to the explosions, and thus put the other parts of the country into safety. At present these are all in continual danger of being swallowed up in some of the subterraneous caverns, the vaults of which, in-

creasing the fire by confining it, may at last be unable to resist its force. This country indeed has always been subject to the effects of an internal conflagration, which appears to have produced in it great revolutions. A whole group of islands, anciently so famous that we know even the names of the towns in the largest of them, has totally disappeared. I refer to the islands which bore the name of Panchaia.

Diodorus * says, that the Island of Panchaia was situated to the south of Arabia Felix, that there was a temple of Jupiter there, of which he gives a magnificent description, and four towns, Hiracia, Dalis, Oceanis, and Panara. The existence of the latter is so well confirmed, that we know its inhabitants to have consisted of Indians, Scythians, and even Cretans: these towns are no where to be found. Even supposing Socotara to have been one of them, what can have become of the rest? They cannot have been united to the continent by the retreat of the sea. There are two reasons that militate against this supposition. For, in the first place, were this the case, there would undoubtedly be some remains of that celebrated temple mentioned by Evemerus, which covered two acres of ground; and was built with free-stone, of a whiteness and polish equal to marble; we should certainly see something of the navigable river so near its source; we should find traces of the four towns which Diodorus has mentioned by name. There is indeed on the coast of Africa the town of Zeila, at the extremity of the gulf so called; but neither its name nor its situation gives any mark of its being one of those belonging to the Island of Panchaia. But even supposing it to be one of them, the question respecting the oth-

* Diod. Bibliot. Hist. lib. 5. et lib. 6, Preserved by Eusebius. Prepar. Evang. lib. 2.

er is still undetermined; and these are monuments which could not have decayed, without leaving some ruins to attest their existence. Evemerus says, that the temple of Jupiter was situated upon a hill. Supposing therefore the towns to have been buried in the sands of Africa, the situation of the temple and the hill would surely preserve them from a similar fate.

The second reason against considering these islands as having become a constituent part of the continent, is drawn from the principles of hydrostatics. The Isthmus of Suez had certainly emerged from the ocean before the Island of Panchaia had disappeared, for Evemerus was acquainted with it, and this author was contemporary with the second success of Alexander. However shallow might be the strait which separated this island from the continent, it is evident, that the plains which form the bottom of it were of a much lower level than the ground which composed the isthmus, since the latter was dry when the former was overflowed. Now it is known that the isthmus is the lowest land, the least elevated above the surface of the sea, of any in this part of the globe. From the straits of Babelmandel to Cape Gardafuy the coast of Africa is composed of sandy downs, which lie extremely high; the coast towards the south is also high enough to see from it to the distance of five leagues without difficulty; which is a much greater elevation than that of the isthmus, and proves therefore a prior existence. If the Island of Panchaia had been united to the continent, the structure of the country makes it evident that such union could only have taken place in these latitudes: which leads me to a reflexion upon the text. Diodorus says, that this island was situated to the south of Arabia Felix. Why has he not assigned its place to the north of Africa, which would have bordered upon it? It would seem:

natural, that he should name the continent which was the least distant. Considering this to be the sense of the passage, we must suppose, that the island was nearer to the coast of Arabia than to that of Africa. If such be the position which he meant to give it, every idea of its having been united to the continent must vanish, since a mere inspection of the coasts will manifest the physical impossibility of such an event. We do not find there a single plain; we find nothing indeed but high mountains, the feet of which are buried in the waves to an unfathomable depth. In what place then could the junction have been effected?

The system of the retreat of the sea defies the most inveterate scepticism; but, when treated with too much warmth of imagination, it may give birth to paradoxes without number. In the labyrinth of inquiries into which it may lead us, let us never lose the clue of hydrostatics, which alone will keep us clear of the errors constantly resulting from a spirit of systematizing. When it is proved, that it is one of the essential properties of fluids to preserve themselves in a state of equilibrium, it necessarily follows, that the ocean cannot have retired from one part of the globe, at the same time that another part which is higher, that is to say, more distant from the centre, is overwhelmed by it. It is in vain then that a philosophy, respectable in other points, would persuade us, that, when the first Hanno made the tour of Africa, half of this vast continent was under water, and especially the Cape of Good Hope. In vain would it assure us, that at that time no part of America existed but the tops of the mountains: such assertions would tend rather to alienate us from the system, than make us partizans to it. It must first be proved, that Carthage, Eziongabar, or whatever place this Hanno departed from, was high-

er than the lands which are defined to have been at that time covered with water; it must be proved, that Phœnicia is higher not only than the Table Mountain, and the mountains called the Tiger Mountains, but also than all the interior parts of Africa, which are unexplored, but which appear, as far as a judgment can be formed of them at a distance, to be very lofty; it must be ascertained, that the plains of America, from the foot of the Andes and the Cordeliers to the shore of the sea, are of a lower level than that of Carthage, which this Hanno is said to have visited. Unless these proofs can be acquired, we are reading in the book of Nature without knowing the alphabet. In vain have I searched for testimonies in all the voyages that have been made in Africa, and followed, step by step, the authors who speak of it; I always find the Isthmus of Suez in my way; and am obliged to infer from it, that, while this isthmus has existed, all the countries which are of a higher elevation must have existed also.

As a general rule, let us never compute the epochs of the first appearances of lands, but by their relative height above the surface of the sea; and when we find traces of the ocean in any part of the globe, and would know whether the period at which these countries first emerged from the water be within the reach of our chronology, let us refer to those countries to the history of which it extends, and their comparative elevation will determine the priority of their appearance; with the exception however of such lands as have been produced by volcanic explosions.

I cannot suppose, therefore, that the Panchaia Islands have been united to the coast of Asia, since the structure of the country does not admit of such a conjecture: nor that they have been joined to Af-

rica, because there is no vestige of them whatever, and because every part of this coast is higher than those places which were contemporary with them.

My opinion is, that this archipelago has disappeared in consequence of some volcanic revolution. The innumerable rocks by which Zeila is encompassed, and which are a great obstruction to navigation, are evidently the effects of some violent commotion: even Zeila itself does not stand perfectly firm on its foundation, but often totters from the action of the fire that is under it. Thus the face of the country, the frequent earthquakes evincing the constant existence of an internal conflagration, the crater of Gebelthor still smoking, all tend to confirm me in the opinion, that these islands have been sunk in the abyss made by the fire beneath their foundations, and that they carried with them into the whirlpool part of the surrounding country, particularly the spot between Socotara and the continent, which is now under water. This space abounds with small islands, which are visibly the tops of eminences, preserved by their elevation from being inundated. Socotara or Zocotara, at the period when Evemerus and the Phoenicians navigated in these climates, I suppose to have been the most distinguished promontory of this part of the African coast. If it had been at that time detached from the continent, it would have been too considerable an island not to be noticed; its extent, its height, its mountains of granite contrasted with the downs of sand which answer to it in Africa, its pleasing and verdant aspect, its fertility compared with the burning sands from which it is separated only by a narrow strait, would have obtained it a place in the narratives of the earliest travellers.

From the arguments I have stated, it may be inferred, that there exists under the whole of this coun-

try an immense volcanic cavity, the fire of which has continued for a number of centuries, and which, if it does not make for itself an opening by which to vent its efforts, will one day, and that perhaps at no very distant period, produce in this part of the world some extraordinary event, by which the boldness of our conjectures, concerning the vestiges of such revolutions as have preceded us, will be justified.

To return to my voyage.

The commercial speculation which brought me to Mocha turned out unfortunately: corn had a bad sale there, and the produce of my cargo was not sufficient to enable me to re-load my vessel with coffee. I contented myself therefore with buying two hundred bales of that article at Bethelfakih; I filled the hold of my vessel with salt, and purchased twenty of the larger sort of asses and two cammels, which, with the necessary stock of water and provisions for them, made up the freight. As I had not casks enough for the water, I was obliged to supply their place by wells (*puits*) constructed by the awkward workmen of the country: but these leaked in the voyage; and if my cattle had not been of the most temperate description, as those of this climate generally are, they would half of them have perished with thirst. While speaking of my quadrupeds, I shall mention one circumstance that struck me as curious, which is, that the asses, from the moment they were put on board, continued perfectly mute through the whole voyage.

Having made all the preparations for my departure in good time, and the first winds of the northerly monsoon beginning to be felt during the two or three last days of May, I began my voyage on

the first of June. This precipitation however I had reason to repent ; and I owe it as a caution to those who may come after me to say, that it is prudent not to sail till the monsoon is steadily set in, as they will otherwise be exposed to the same difficulties to which I was subjected.

I had weighed about six in the evening, and when I arrived at the straits it was two in the morning. As the darkness prevented me from clearing them, I cast anchor at a short distance, and remained till daylight, when the wind changed and kept me there three days. On the fourth I sailed again, and was obliged, in the course of four-and-twenty hours, to repass the straits and return into the Red Sea, where I lay at anchor two days longer, at the end of which I set sail once more, but did not get much forwarder than before. I was five-and-twenty days struggling against the currents and keeping myself from the coast of Africa, which I had thus, against my inclination, the leisure of examining as far as Cape Gardafuy. When we were carried too close to the land by the calms and the currents, if, in the coolness of the night, a slight breeze from the land reached the vessel, the heat which it brought with it was so great, that we were obliged to shut our eyes, though it had seemingly time to cool by passing through a space of three leagues over the surface of the sea.

On the twenty-sixth day I was attacked by one of the most violent tempests I ever experienced ; the second day of its continuance brought me in sight of Socotara, and if I had had to contend with the wind and sea together we must certainly have perished ; but, fortunately, the wind blew from the south-west, and carried us in the right course, which diminished the force of the tempest. My vessel too at this time felt the effects of the damage it had received in the Ganges ; for in no other way can I account for the accident that happened to her.

One of the joints of the keel opened, and suddenly occasioned a leak, which, during the violence of the storm, was so great, that, though four pumps were constantly at work, and the rest of the crew employed in emptying the water with buckets through the scuttles, it gained so considerably upon us, that when the wind began to abate we had no less than five feet and a half of water in the hold : a condition the more dreadful, as it showed us the gradual approach of a fate which all our efforts could not avoid. I had prepared my pistols, intending by means of them to rid myself of the misery of so cruel a death, and an ineffectual struggling with the waves. To increase the horror of our situation, two of the pumps broke at once; and the furniture of the third failed us. I had nothing with which to supply its place, and if the accident had happened twenty-four hours sooner, it is probable that nothing could have saved us. By good luck the storm abated, and the vessel being less strained, the leak made but two-and-thirty inches in an hour. It was still such, however, as not to be kept under by less than two pumps; and it was therefore indispensably necessary to repair one of them. I shall enter here into a few details for the instruction of such seamen into whose hands my book may fall.

The pumps work by two valves; one fixed upon a moveable body called the upper box, containing a hole which this valve hermetically closes, and the other fixed to an-immoveable body called the lower box. The upper box, in descending, presses the column of water upon the valve of the lower box, and keeps it shut, while the same pressure raises the valve of the upper box; and gives a passage through it to the water. In the re-ascent of the upper box, when its valve shuts by the weight of the column of water above it, that of the lower box opens and af-

fords a passage to the water below it, which is thus drawn up by the suction. It thus appears, that the effect of the pump depends on the operation of the valves, and that without valves it could not be worked. These, however, we had lost; yet I contrived notwithstanding to put my pumps into a condition for working. I had to find the means of supplying the loss of the valves, and to substitute something which would answer their purpose; that of completely stopping the holes of both the boxes, agreeably to the action of the pump. To effect this, I heated two four-pound shot, and applied them red-hot to the mouths of the valves, where I let them burn the wood so as to bury themselves half-way in it; I then cooled them, and without any other preparation put them into the pump. Their weight did not prevent them from giving way to the water, as much as was necessary, both in the ascent and descent of the upper box; and these two motions acting successively upon them, brought them back to their position in the holes which they had burnt, and which of course they exactly filled. By this contrivance the pump worked as well as ever.

After thirteen days of fatigue and trouble, I came in sight of the coast of Malabar. My crew now became refractory, and threatened to run the vessel aground, being determined not to expose themselves to the danger of a longer voyage. It was with great difficulty I prevailed upon them to accompany me as far as Pondicherry, where our labours would end. When we reached this place we were all in a miserable state, exhausted with weakness and fatigue. I received all the assistance that could be given me, and began to unload my cargo, which had suffered by the accidents of the passage. I had lost a camel and ten asses; the rest soon recovered their strength, and I sent them by another vessel to the

Isle of France, and had mine repaired in the river of Coringui. The entrance of this river was difficult for so large a ship, but luckily the bar consisted only of soft mud, through which I made a passage with the help of my capstan.

At the time of my arrival in this river, the country was afflicted by a most cruel famine; the inhabitants died with such dreadful rapidity, that they could not be buried. The roads and fields were strewn with dead bodies, which had made this province the country of jackals and birds of prey: this was a disgusting spectacle, and it was out of the power of the government to remedy it.

The conduct of the people during the continuance of this destructive calamity was marked with a resignation and fortitude, that prove how compatible the contempt of death is with the utmost gentleness of manners. The granaries of the rich were full of corn; the poorer sort knew this, yet suffered themselves to perish, without attempting to make themselves masters of it. The manner in which they waited for death and submitted to it, appears, from its singularity, to be worthy of record. Though my pencil shrinks from the delineation, I will nevertheless attempt it, that a faithful portrait may be given of the character of the natives of India.

As soon as an individual of either sex found, that all his efforts to prolong existence were in vain, he caused himself to be carried to the door of some rich man, in whose sight he wished to expire, as if to reproach him for not having extended to him from his hoard the relief, which would have saved him from death. There, lying upon the ground, and receiving from his friends a pot of water, sufficient to maintain him for two or three days, with his head wrapped in his apron, he waited patiently for the fatal moment, defending himself to his last

breath against the animals that attempted to devour him alive, while no exhortations, on the part of those who offered to succour him, could induce him to accept the means, which, in his own opinion, were useless, for preserving a life he had resolved to sacrifice. Those whom some remains of strength deceived with the hopes of a longer existence, and who were surpris'd by death, fell indiscriminately wherever it seized upon them. I was seldom without the distressing spectacle, every morning, of three or four bodies of persons who had died in this manner during the night. The fortitude of the Indians endured to the last moment: they saw death approaching, waited for it, and submitted to the stroke without a murmur or complaint, without having engaged in any seditious tumults, without having offered even the smallest violence to those whose affluence protected them from a similar fate, and died, calling upon Brama, their last hours unimbittered by a single sentiment of malevolence.

But enough of these gloomy images.

The road of Coringui is the wintering place to which vessels retire that are obliged to pass the bad season on the coast of India. The worst that can happen to them in this situation is to be aground upon the mud banks, which is not attended with the slightest risk. Shipwrecks nevertheless are frequent in these parts, which arises from the sandy point that defends the bay to the south, projecting considerably into the sea, with dangerous ridges and shelves.

During my stay in this place, a vessel struck suddenly in the night against this point and was lost. I sent out my boats and crew to her assistance, and many articles were saved, among which was some rice in a sack. The water had affected it, and the

grains had swelled and were burst; yet, so great was the scarcity in this place, that it sold at the rate of six rupees the sack, which is fifteen livres for a hundred and fifty pounds weight. Mr. Dineur, the supercargo, testified his gratitude by making me an offer of an elegant boat, which I refused to accept as a present, but which I agreed to purchase of him. He wished me to take it at a price much below its value, but what I had done required no recompense: in a case of this nature, all seamen are brothers, and ought to assist each other to the utmost of their power.

As I did not find at Coringui the necessary materials for repairing my ship's bottom, I could not have her properly careened, and was obliged to run her ashore, and have her put upon the stocks. It is in this business that the industry of the Indians shines forth in all its splendour: by their patience and perseverance, they effect, with the assistance of no tackling, no pulleys, no ropes, no capstan, no mechanical force of any sort, what we are unable to perform without the aid of many, the most powerful, means combined. Labour costs them so little, that the expense of it is scarcely an object of attention. The pay of a workman is a *dabou* per day; so that for a rupee of the value of about fifty fous, or two shillings sterling, the labour of eighty men may be obtained. What is more extraordinary, this trivial pay is sufficient, in an ordinary year, for the maintenance of an Indian and his whole family.

Their method of raising a vessel is simple and ingenious. The details into which I shall enter upon this subject will be found perhaps insipid to many of my readers; but those who have a pleasure in contemplating the progress of the human mind will

not be offended, though I should be a little tedious in dwelling upon particulars, which will furnish a comparison between nations yet young in existence, and those whom luxury and the arts have advanced to the height of civilization.

They begin by fixing upon the spot in the meadow where the vessel is to be placed, and this being done, they dig a basin there, which they call *goudi*. When the basin is deep enough to contain the vessel, they admit water into it from the river, by piercing a little dike which has been made at its entrance. As this country, however, is not yet hardened and dry, but has water a little below its surface, as soon as they have dug to the depth of two or three feet, their trench is overflowed: in this situation, without a pump or any machine whatever, with nothing but a bucket, they clear it as completely as could be done with all the assistance of hydraulics. This method of baling out water is not confined to maritime operations; they use it likewise in watering their fields, when they have not an opportunity of establishing a *picote*.*

The bucket they employ for this purpose is flat, and has four handles, to which are fastened as many ropes, the ends of which are held by four men, two on each side. Though the bucket is flat, it has a sort of hollow on one side, which we shall call the back; the front, on the contrary, is in the form of a shovel, or rather, to speak more intelligibly, the implement itself is a sort of hollow shovel. Two cords are fastened to the handles at the corners of the front, and two others to the back. The greater is the depth of the basin, the further do the men who work the bucket stand from the point to

* An instrument for drawing water resembling that of our gardeners and brickmakers.—T.

which the water is to be thrown. Their distance from this object ought to be equal to the depth, since the bucket in its motion describes the arc of a circle, of which the ropes are the radii, and the men the centre.

To understand the operation of this implement, which is more worthy of attention as it supplies the place of a pump, let us figure to ourselves the situation of the right-hand man. In his left hand he holds the rope fastened to the front of the bucket, and in his right that of the back (the man on the left holds them in the contrary hands). He begins by swinging the bucket: after which, lengthening out the ropes, he lets it down so as to touch the water, and then with a slight effort of his left hand forces the front of the bucket below the surface, and thus fills it. In completing the arc of a circle, it reaches the height to which it is to be raised, when by the rope in his right hand he depresses the back of it, and the water runs out. The bucket descends in the same direction, fills again in returning, and empties itself in the same manner. It is easy to conceive, that the motion is quick, and, if the bucket be of any size, that the exercise must be very fatiguing. I estimated this contrivance to be equal in its effect to a pump four inches in diameter in the tube, and worked by eight men.

With the help of this bucket, they keep their basin dry, till they have dug a sufficient depth to float a ship when filled by the water at high tide. They then open the basin when the tide is down, by raising the little dike which defends the entrance of it. The vessel then enters it without difficulty, at the return of the tide, and as soon as it is in, they stop up the mouth of the basin, by replacing the dike which they had removed: and thus their vessel is

a float, inclosed in a bason dug in the middle of a field.

An European engineer would think that as yet little was done, and would consider the rest of the operation as the greatest difficulty. The Indians, on the contrary, have performed the most laborious part of their work, and make no account of the remainder. Their bucket has still to make a great figure, and by means of two of these instruments they fill the bason to the brim in a day at most. The vessel rises with the water, and when the *goudi* is full, they bring earth and raise a bank round the vessel, still filling with their buckets as they go on. They might thus lift their vessel to the clouds, if they were to employ a sufficient quantity of earth; but they seldom raise it more than ten feet. When it has attained the necessary height, they fill the *goudi* with earth, by which the water rises above the banks and runs off, and the vessel is entrenched in a soft earth, which yields to its shape. When the water is cleared, they make the holes at the bottom of the bank, to drain the mould on which the vessel rests thoroughly dry; and in this state they leave it for six weeks or two months, till they judge the earth to have acquired a sufficient solidity. They then dig round the vessel, placing the requisite supports and stocks; and finish the whole by taking away all the earth they have brought, which leaves the vessel raised upon the ground, and in a situation to allow all the necessary repairs to be done to her bottom. This method of proceeding is the more ingenious, as it neither requires extraordinary exertion of strength, nor is exposed to accidents: the only inconvenience attending it is its slowness, which however is but a slight disadvantage in a country, where the vessels are prevented by the monsoons from making more than one voyage in a year.

Such was the mode to which I was obliged to resort in repairing my ship, and which detained me till January. I then returned to Pondicherry, whence I sailed to the Isle of France and thus finished my voyage.

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